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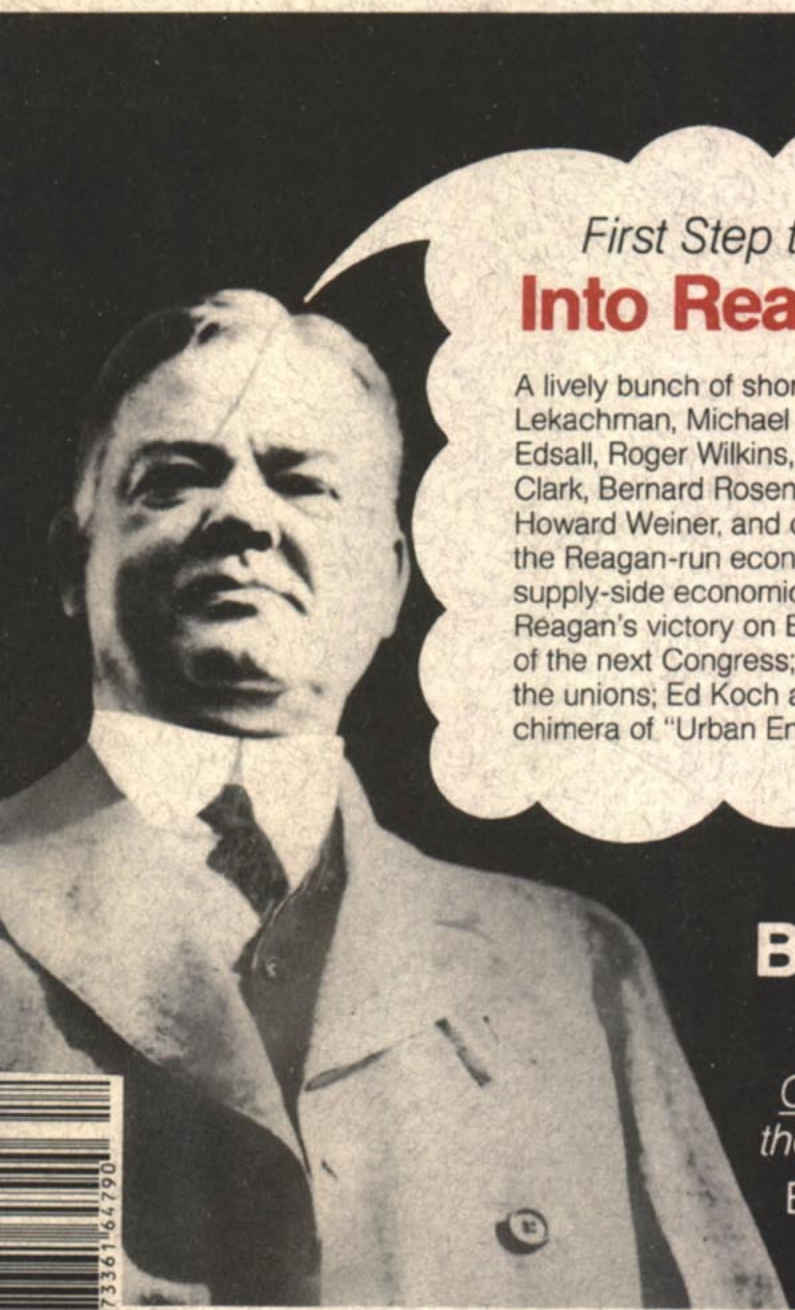

First Step to the Pits?

Into Reaganland

A lively bunch of short pieces by Robert Lekachman, Michael Walzer, Thomas B. Edsall, Roger Wilkins, James Sleeper, Joseph Clark, Bernard Rosenberg, Luther Carpenter, Howard Weiner, and others on prospects for the Reagan-run economy; the panacea of supply-side economics; the chilling effect of Reagan's victory on Blacks; the rightward turn of the next Congress; the growing troubles of the unions; Ed Koch as spirit of the times; the chimera of "Urban Enterprise Zones;" etc., etc.

BREAKING FAITH

Commentary and the American Jews

Bernard Avishai

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Henry Pachter (1907-1980)

Last year, on the night of December 10, our friend and long-time member of the *Dissent* editorial board Henry Pachter died of a heart attack at the age of seventy-three. His "rich and active life," in the words of his family, had brought him from the streets of Weimar Berlin, where as a university student and a member of the Communist youth movement he opposed the rise of the Nazis, in flight to New York by way of Paris. He would remain here the rest of his life. Over the years he wrote a politically sophisticated journalism—in English, and also in German for a number of Swiss and German newspapers—which revealed a first-rate, often original and dissenting intelligence grappling with increasingly complex issues. He participated actively in a number of socialist and democratic movements of his time, always asserting his independence from dogma and cliché, often in ways that seemed aggressive and provoking. Stimulating and forthright, Henry Pachter built a reputation as a respected writer and thinker.

Henry started writing regularly for *Dissent* several years after it began. He became a mainstay among our writers, and in my opinion produced some of our finest essays. I believe his association with his fellow editors—often critical and controversial—stimulated him; it certainly had that impact upon us!

Beginning in 1939 in Paris (with *Espagne: Creuset Politique*), Henry published seven books, one in French, one in German, and five in English—the last, in 1978, his *Modern Germany: A Social, Cultural, and Political History*.

Most of all, he was a master of the middle-length essay. Simply to list a few of Henry's better known essays will give a sense of his impressive scope and range: "Confessions of an Old-Timer" (1958); "George Kennan: The Perils of History" (1961); "Three Economic Models: Capitalism, the Welfare State, and Socialism" (1965); "Revisionist Historians and the Cold War" (1968); "The Right to be Lazy" (1974); "Who are the Palestinians?" (1974); "Freedom, Authority, Participation" (1978). Invariably lively and written in an English requiring little editing, Pachter's essays covered a broad territory of history, economics, the social sciences and—particularly—the meaning of socialism and socialist morality. Henry was a sharp polemicist as well. I once reproached him, saying that when he sat down at his typewriter it became an instrument of warfare. But he would accept restraining influences in his polemics and was not above criticizing himself in the guise of his alter ego (Henri Rabasseire), a pseudonym he sometimes employed.

Many of his friends, among whom I include myself, felt that Henry Pachter was not given his proper due, particularly in the academic world. This, understandably, was a sensitive question with him. His wide culture, his love of scholarship, research and critical thought went unrewarded. Given the opportunity to teach (at the New School for Social Research, City College of New York, Rutgers University), he was received in a more respected and profound way by students than "popular" teachers. In the classroom he was generous, warm-hearted, and patient, reserving his more harsh judgments of the academic world (toward which he had rather a critical and traditional approach) for elsewhere. Many of his students became long-time friends and admirers, feel-

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ing that he had put into practice effectively the classical notion of education as a "leading out" of ignorance into critical knowledge.

Henry Pachter was capable of loyalty and generosity toward his friends; but he was a shy and diffident man who concealed this with an outward aggressiveness. He was charming and considerate with women, and particularly warm and playfully awkward with young children.

Henry had a wide range of interests besides his academic work. He was an excellent amateur pianist, and I recall his embarrassment when I accidently came upon him playing a Beethoven sonata. All this was part of the broad tradition of the West European democratic and socialist culture of which he felt himself a part.

Perhaps most significant of all in his life was his success in retaining his original idealism, his belief in the possibility of a socialist future. Conventional cynicism and weariness never touched his mind or spirit. I remarked once to Henry that in one respect he reminded me of Trotsky (whom he detested because of his "Leninism" and statist views). Both had succeeded despite everything in keeping to the end the initial enthusiasm and idealism that had first brought them into the socialist movement. One side of Henry Pachter's thinking always retained a libertarian, even quasi-anarchist cast. He believed in democracy, decentralized and within reach of all. He lived in the finest tradition of democratic socialism.

STANLEY PLASTRIK □

Cabled from Bonn

Heinz Pachter was a man who kept the culture of Weimar alive in New York, and who explained to some of us in Europe things about America that otherwise we would not have known or understood.

In the last few years I saw him rarely and yet was well aware of the fertile way in which he imparted his insights.

With me mourn others who had his confidence and the privilege of sharing in his critical intelligence.

WILLY BRANDT □

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An Annual Prize

The Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas (FSISI) announces an annual contest open to young writers (30 or under) for a reflective essay of between 4,000 and 8,000 words on any topic that reflects an independent study of social or political problems. An award of $500 will be made to the winner, and publication of the essay will be arranged in *Dissent*.

The closing date for entries in this first Annual FSISI Essay Contest is May 1, 1981, and will be, for the subsequent annual contests, every May 1 thereafter. The judges, whose decision is final, will be Irving Howe, Michael Walzer and Lewis Coser. A stamped, self-addressed return envelope must be enclosed or submissions will not be returned. For any further information write to the Foundation.

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130 HENRY PACHTER (1907-1980) *by Stanley Plastrik, Willy Brandt*

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

135 *by Joseph Clark, Robert Lekachman, George Eckstein, Peter B. Plastrik, Thomas B. Edsall, Roger Wilkins, Howard R. Weiner & Luther Carpenter, Michael Walzer, Bernard Rosenberg, Jim Sleeper, Art Buchwald*

ARTICLES

164 FACTS WE DARE NOT FORGET — *Excerpts from a Neglected Government Report on Poverty & Unemployment*

173 INFORMERS AND OTHER VILLAINS *by Murray Hausknecht*

178 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND "THE RACE OF LIFE" *by Isaac Kramnick*

188 FROM HOLOCAUST TO "HOLOCAUST" *by Claude Lanzmann*

195 THE CORRUPTIONS OF SCIENCE *by Gerald Cavanaugh*

203 THE AMBIGUOUS LEGACY OF EDUARD BERNSTEIN *by Henry Pachter*

NOTEBOOK

217 MIDGE DECTER AND THE BOYS ON THE BEACH *by Lewis Coser*

218 RELIGIOUS POWER IN IRAN: PRE-ISLAMIC ORIGINS *by Amira Husaini*

BOOKS

221 REVIEWS *by Peter Clecak, Rose Laub Coser, Dick Howard*

232 **LETTERS**

A SPECIAL FEATURE

236 BREAKING FAITH: COMMENTARY AND THE AMERICAN JEWS *by Bernard Avishai*

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Into Reaganland

Here is a preliminary boxscore on the new Administration, covering a range of topics while exhausting none. We shall return to many of them. We put this section together before it was entirely clear which social programs the new Administration would cut, or the extent that it would cut them, or whether Congress would go along with the cuts. Probably, the Administration will propose deeper cuts than it expects to make, so it can convince its right-wing supporters that it stands by its "principles" and decent Americans that it is not all that inhumane. This is called political strategy. — EDS.

Joseph Clark

A President Who Keeps His Promises

Will President Reagan keep his promises? It depends on which ones you have in mind.

Six days after the election an enthusiastic supporter of the victors, David Rockefeller, went to Argentina and exuberantly announced that at least one promise would be kept—talk and action on human rights would be toned down. Right-wing dictatorships, especially in Central and South America, were promised our support. Shortly thereafter, the new secretary of state and then the president himself at his first press conference outlined the new priorities—human rights out, anti-terrorism in.

Soon it appeared, however, that some types of terrorism would still be in. Following Rockefeller's assurances to Argentina and the Latin-American dictators, and after Haig and Reagan proclaimed the new priorities, the United Nations' Commission on Human Rights reported (*New York Times*, February 5) "that Argentina alone accounted for more than half of the 11,000 to 13,000 people who have been reported missing and are assumed to be victims of political terrorism." Another Reagan enthusiast and potential official, Rita Hauser, appeared on public television (February 10) and added South Africa to Argentina as countries that have been offended by Carter's emphasis on human rights and would now head the list of American friendlies.

Demonstrating remarkable insouciance about the right-wing terrorists of El Salvador who tortured and murdered four American nuns and missionaries and two AFL-CIO supporters of land reform, the Reagan administration moved to substitute military measures for a political solution in that battered little country.

The first foreign leader to receive a royal welcome by President Reagan was Chun Doo Hwan of South Korea. He was made more comfortable by postponement of publication of the congressionally mandated report on worldwide human rights until he had departed these shores.

SOME VETERAN OPPONENTS of Soviet totalitarianism have been given reason to wonder how the Reagan administration proposes to fight against the Communists. Seeking the most drastic condemnation of Communists that came to his mind, President Reagan decried their failure to accept belief in "the afterlife." Even the shade of the Anglican theologian William Ralph Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, must be rattling its bones because when Inge was among the living he had contempt for the idea of an afterlife for individual minds, though he

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believed in eternal values. And most of those who led America's revolution, the Deists who wrote our Constitution without mention of a deity (and who never once conducted prayers when in the constitutional assembly), had little room in their philosophy for life after death. They too, however, believed in enduring values such as human rights.

With Soviet military occupation continuing in Afghanistan, with Soviet troops massed on Polish borders, and with President Reagan hurling verbal anathemas against the Soviets, the Administration was considering lifting the partial grain embargo imposed by Carter. Then it took really drastic action: Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin was barred from using the back door to the State Department!

In domestic affairs the Reagan administration emphasized "across-the-board" cuts and equality of sacrifice. (Anatole France, where are you? We need your reminder that "the law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges"!) The first test for equal sacrifices came at the inaugural ball where ladies in $10,000 dresses and gentlemen in $1,500 suits came out of $40,000 limousines and couldn't get into the ball because the sponsors had oversold admissions. Another test came when the reports about cuts in the Food Stamp program were balanced by the speedier lifting of oil-price controls. Heating- and driving-fuel costs zoomed while oil-company profits went skyward. And the proposed lowering of the minimum wage underscored how equal the sacrifices would be.

OTHER PROMISES being kept were to throw much more money at the armed forces. Secretary of Defense Weinberger may be known as Cap the knife, but he was not about to cut the triple pensions that generals and admirals (retired) were collecting along with their socialized medical benefits. The new Health and Human Resources secretary was eliminating family-planning education, but the new first lady had her personal manicurist flown to Washington from California because her nails are brittle. This will be balanced by the proposals to eliminate various urban aid programs, which, in turn, will be balanced by continuing subsidies for Senator Helms's favorite agriculturalists, the tobacco farmers. □

Robert Lekachman

The Economy: A Bleak Outlook

Supply-side economics, the official Reagan alternative to the scorned Keynesian prescription, amounts to a gamble on the proposition that lower taxes will stimulate enough new investment and effort to flood supermarkets and showrooms with cheap merchandise of steadily improving quality. More production, the argument runs, is the best cure for inflation. This assurance is the core of the supply-side position. But with varying degrees of emphasis, supply siders also advocate substantial curtailment of social programs, relaxation of environmental and other regulation, and Friedmanite monetarism. Jack Kemp, now Number Three in the House of Representatives' Republican hierarchy, took a comparatively mild line on social spending in his 1979 manifesto *An American Renaissance* because he was convinced that the three-year schedule of tax reduction embodied in the Kemp-Roth bill would generate so much economic growth and so many new jobs that federal spending on food stamps, unemployment compensation, and welfare would shrink of its own accord.

Times change. In the wake of last year's election, Mr. Kemp joined David Stockman, then a House colleague and now director of the Office of Management and Budget, in the formulation of the much-leaked "Avoiding a GOP Economic Dunkirk," a "private" memorandum to Ronald Reagan. The tone is harder and the rhetoric warmer. "The federal budget," aver the authors, "has now become an automatic *coast-to-coast soup line*" [their emphasis]. Their hit list encompasses many protections and entitlements dating from the New Deal, among them aid to the unemployed, farm credit, help for the disabled, mass

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transit, food stamps, school lunches, CETA job-funding, and so on.

Murray Weidenbaum, the new Council of Economic Advisers' chairman, is a leader of the anti-regulators, noted for his "demonstration" that the annual cost to American business of federal regulation is a tidy $100 billion. Weidenbaum's statistics are shaky. He neglects to subtract from the costs of regulations any estimate of their benefits. He includes in his round total the costs of compliance with the regulations of such old-line agencies as the Internal Revenue Service. No matter. The appeal of Weidenbaum's approach to corporate types is obvious.

As for the monetarists, they dominate the Federal Reserve in the large person of Paul Volcker. They are also entrenched in the Treasury. Norman Ture, an ex-tax consultant, Beryl Sprinkle, a prominent bank economist, and Paul Craig Roberts, formerly of the *Wall Street Journal*, occupy important subcabinet posts and profess the true Friedman faith. However, the Treasury is headed by Donald Regan who in his previous career at Merrill Lynch enunciated no audible economic ideology and even contributed, much to the distress of Republican hard-liners, to the campaigns of liberal Democrats.

Hovering in the background are the good, gray veterans of Republican administrations from the Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford eras—Arthur F. Burns, George Schultz, Alan Greenspan, and Herbert Stein. The quartet are Reagan loyalists but their policy preferences are in the direction of old-fashioned balanced budgets and their sympathy for supply-side analysis is controllable. In their austere pharmacopia, budget cuts must precede tax reduction—leafy vegetables before chocolate sundaes.

It is safe to assume that Ronald Reagan is no less bored than other politicians by economics as a topic and economists as conversationalists. On precedent, events are far more likely to shape his administration's budgetary responses than the cogency of the intellectual arguments urged by any of the members of his official family. A third OPEC price explosion will threaten so much acceleration of inflation that tax cutting will seem dangerously irresponsible. A rapid slide into renewed recession, another genuine possibility, would make tax cuts palatable to unregenerate Keynesians as well as supply siders. Recession would also stiffen even conservative resistance to limitations upon unemployment benefits, food stamps, and other cushions against adversity. Indeed, truly dramatic acceleration of inflation might soften the Administration's opposition to wage and price controls, much as in 1971 a far milder inflation impelled Nixon, equally vociferous in his condemnation of controls, to impose a 90-day price and wage freeze, followed by 13 months of comparatively efficacious limitations upon the upward movement of both wages and prices.

It is easy to exaggerate the significance of the internal disputes among tax cutters, social program assassins, deregulators, and monetarists, because there is little reason to believe that singly or in combination their magic is powerful enough to cope with the enormous economic problems that are the heritage of the last decade. In all advanced, oil-importing nations, growth has slowed since OPEC's 1973 price coup. Slow growth exacerbates group tensions, embitters political debate, and threatens the interests of vulnerable groups and regions. In a conservative polity such as the United States, it produces electoral consequences like those we now experience. Also directly related to OPEC's transformation of the global pecking order is the recycling problem—the flow of funds from OPEC surpluses in European and American banks that lend them to shaky, unpleasant regimes in Zaire, South Korea, Brazil, Bolivia, and Turkey, which send them back to OPEC. An especially gaudy default would threaten the solvency of one or several Western banks and quite conceivably endanger other financial institutions. Saudi curtailment of its current pumping rate would by itself precipitate another oil crisis and plunge the Western world into serious recession. Nor is there reassurance to be found in the state of the world food supplies. Another year

Our Fund Drive — A Big Success

We're very happy to report that 400 of our friends contributed to our bi-annual fund drive, now completed, the sum of $41,500 in cash and pledges. This insures the survival of the magazine for the next year or two, and enables us to plan ahead. We want to thank all those who sent in contributions, large and small.

THE EDITORS

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of poor harvests in the United States and the Soviet Union will send supermarket prices soaring.

These are some of the large, unpredictable events that economists term "exogenous" and profess themselves helpless to incorporate in the largest of econometric models. In the ideal world of economics, change is small and disturbances by either nature or outrageous foreigners infrequent. To reiterate the point, this Administration, like its predecessors, will find itself coping as best it can with events beyond its control.

STILL, THERE IS MORE to be said about the ethos of the Reaganauts. If, by some miracle, no large exogenous event dominates economic policy in the next year or two, the Administration will have a chance to try out its cures for inflation, slow growth, declining productivity, and high unemployment. Such an experiment is likely to be a misfortune for the supply siders and for the rest of us. The official plans for the economy are internally inconsistent. If persisted in, they will exacerbate current maladies and even evoke nostalgia for the golden years of the Carter presidency.

The prime contradiction is between tax and monetary policy. Tax cuts, particularly in the company of larger defense appropriations, are in the short run unavoidably inflationary. Even if the highest hopes of the supply siders are in time fulfilled, the acceleration of growth and the improvement in productivity, which new incentives to effort and investment might conceivably facilitate, will at best be registered two, three, four or more years from the date President Reagan signs the Kemp-Roth tax bill. It takes time to construct new factories, fabricate and install new machines, and train managers and workers in their use. In the meantime, well-trained American consumers will continue to spend 94 or 95 cents out of each additional dollar of take-home pay.

Which brings me to the Federal Reserve. If its Board of Governors "accommodates" to increased spending by consumers and larger investment by corporations, it will enlarge the supply of money and credit and thus administer another unneeded shove to inflation. I suppose it is possible that a true believer in the unique virtue of tax reduction would simply counsel patience and fortitude, after the example of England's Margaret Thatcher. But American politicians and their constituents are more impatient and less masochistic than their British cousins.

In any case, the present position of leading Reagan policy-makers is opposed to accommodation. To draw once again on the sacred text of the Kemp-Stockman memorandum, the task of the Federal Reserve is to impose discipline upon money growth. The Fed, sternly advises the memorandum, should be required

> . . . to eschew all consideration of extraneous economic variables like short-term interest rates, housing market conditions, business cycle fluctuations, etc., and to concentrate instead on one exclusive task: bringing the growth of the Federal Reserve credit and bank reserves to a prudent rate and stabilization of the international and domestic purchasing power of the Dollar.

If the Fed follows these precepts, it will ignore the clamor of businessmen and developers for new credit at reasonable rates of interest to finance larger inventories and new projects. A ferocious crunch on credit will ensue and interest rates will soar to figures that will make borrowers sigh for the good old days of a mere 20 percent prime. The recession thus promoted will be deep and protracted. In such an atmosphere, it should go without saying, any fledgling investment boom will expire before it gets well under way.

The alternatives are genuinely stark. Accommodation by the Fed risks intolerably high inflation. Monetary moralism will generate frightening contraction. Lamentably missing is sensible incomes policy, starting with the six-month freeze on prices and incomes advocated by commentators as diverse as Felix Rohatyn and Gar Alperovitz and followed by tax innovations that reward good conduct by corporate price-setters and union negotiators with tax benefits and punish misbehavior with tax penalties. Without such policy the supply siders send conflicting messages, expansion from tax reduction and contraction from monetary restraint.

By the time these jaundiced comments emerge in print, it may be clear what actual course the

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Prize Winner

We are pleased to announce that the Eugene V. Debs Foundation has awarded its first annual Bryant Spann Memorial Prize to Marshall Berman, an editor of *Dissent*, for his article, "'All That Is Solid Melts Into Air'—Marx, Modernism, and Modernization," which appeared in our Winter 1978 issue. — EDS.

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Reagan administration chooses to pursue, to the extent that exogenous events allow any considerable latitude of discretion. For it may be that Stockman-Kemp and their allies "peaked" too early (the danger Richard Nixon anxiously sought to avoid). So it may happen, after much huffing and puffing, that a president who dislikes commotion, prefers new horses to new thoughts, and hates to interrupt placid evenings and weekends will settle for the comparative moderation of the Ford stewardship—a touch of tax reduction, a nibble at social programs, less than fatal harassment of the regulators, and quiet encouragement of the Fed to behave prudently. And so, monetarist theory or no monetarist theory, he may avoid plunging a frail economy into a politically disastrous recession.

If events drift toward this anticlimax, the Reagan administration is likely eerily to resemble the Carter years, much as Carter policy became increasingly hard to differentiate from the Ford regime. No one should clap with even one hand for continued alternation of recession and sluggish growth and for continuing inflation and high unemployment. All the same, they are vastly to be preferred to the adoption of the complete Stockman-Kemp prospectus for a meaner America, recalling Malthus's cheerful notation that "at nature's great table, there are no places set for some." In his heart, Ronald Reagan may not really be a Reaganaut. This is a possibility already alarming to the hard right and, accordingly, a source of tremulous hope for those elsewhere located on the political spectrum. □

George Eckstein

Supply-Side Economics: Panacea or Handout for the Rich?

Beset by inflation and rising taxes, people look for simplistic formulas—"Proposition 13," the Kemp-Roth 30-percent income-tax cut. Another such "magic" formula has been successfully peddled by business economists and quickly picked up by the media: supply-side economics (SSE). This cruel hoax deserves a look.

It starts with three assumptions: (1) that steady economic growth is essential to the smooth functioning of a democratic society; (2) that our economy is prevented from growing because of unfilled investment needs that are caused by insufficient capital formation; (3) that this insufficiency could and should be remedied by tax cuts designed to stimulate saving over spending, complemented by both a speedup of depreciation and a slowdown of such social costs as environmental protection and safety regulations. These measures are assumed to work as incentives to capital investment, new R & D (research and development), and general economic growth, with a direct stimulative effect on production, and a trickle-down effect on employment and demand. How do all these assumptions stand up in reality?

Let us accept the first assumption regarding the importance of steady economic growth, provided we learn to include qualitative growth (improvement of the environment, safety at work and in public places) in our overall concept of growth.

But I surely question the second assumption; it is simply not true. To begin with, there is at present an overall surplus and not a lack of production capacity. Throughout 1980, industrial capacity has moved along a recession level, from 70 percent to 78 percent, well below the 90 percent level that is considered full capacity. Nor has there been a shortage of available investment capital, either from retained earnings or from outside sources. According to a report in the *New York Times* (September 3, 1980) entitled "American Industry Heads Toward Record Year for New Financing," a tremendous spurt in new investment has occurred in the capital markets. During the first seven months of 1980, these investments amounted to $15 billion. Projected for the full year, this represents a fourfold increase over the $6 billion annual average of the preceding three years. Moreover recent years have seen a steady increase in the influx of foreign capital, and a decrease in American investment abroad. The real problem is,

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Where do these investments go? We will return to this question shortly.

The long-range figures are equally eloquent. According to a study conducted by Wharton Econometric Forecasting, real fixed investment averaged about 9 percent of GNP during the 1950s, the time of our fastest economic growth; during the 1960s and early 1970s it rose to 10 percent, and to 10.5 percent in 1978. However, this increase of investment was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in productivity. On the contrary, the growth rate of real GNP sank from 3.1 percent in the 1950s to 2.9 percent in the 1960s, and to 1.4 percent in the 1970's, with a negative growth rate at the end of the decade.*

* These figures represent the drop in the productivity of capital, arrived at by eliminating the factor of labor input. How strange that this remarkable decline in the productivity of capital is conveniently overlooked by most establishment economists and the media, while much ado is made about a supposed decline in labor productivity. The latter's decline, insofar as it exists at all, is largely caused by idle capacity and the shift to low-productivity service industries. As Edward Denison and Lester Thurow have convincingly demonstrated, lack of investment and a drop of work discipline play little or no role here.

Peter B. Plastrik

The Grim Word from Detroit

The beating heart of the American auto industry is Detroit. It is home for 78 auto and auto-related manufacturing plants employing 200,000 workers and for the corporate headquarters of the "Big Three" companies (Volkswagen of America is also here) and the United Auto Workers.

Once the symbol of concentrated power and wealth, Detroit now is on the ropes, bloodied by a revolution in consumer taste.

The business of putting Americans into smaller cars—"the transition"—has crippled the industry that directly and indirectly employs about 4 million workers across the country and consumes 21 percent of the nation's steel, 60 percent of synthetic rubber, 11 percent of aluminum, and 25 percent of glass.

Joblessness here has soared to Depression levels. In January, around the nation, 200,000 auto workers were out of work. Membership in the UAW has dropped 20 percent, down to 1.2 million.

Pushed into a backseat by Japanese automakers, the Big Three's auto executives contemplate an estimated loss of over $4 billion in 1980, and plot their surival.

Americans will buy smaller cars as rising gasoline prices spur the search for fuel efficiency, and the shrinking size of the American family allows a redefinition—"downsizing"—of comfort. The consumers, for half a century easily led up the ladder of auto size and power (bigger is better) by industry marketing, now are calling the shots: "Should I buy Japanese or American?"

In his office, UAW President Douglas A. Fraser acknowledged that the critical issue for the industry, overshadowed for now by the recession's effect, is competition with the Japanese.

"I think you've got to say they [the Japanese] are doing a better job than we are in [car] finishes. It's yet to be proven, in fact, there's some contrary evidence, that as a mechanical instrument theirs are any better. I would argue that ours are better. I think there's some evidence accumulating that their engines are not as durable, the whole power train is not as durable as ours. And there are certain things we know how to do better—air-conditioning, automatic transmission—because we've done it longer and more often."

The Japanese grabbed their hold (now a one-quarter market share) despite a downsizing program begun by American auto-makers in 1975. Between 1975 and 1980, the average American car lost 890 pounds (22 percent) and gained 6.5 miles per gallon (45 percent). Use of four-cylinder engines tripled, according to a report prepared by Secretary of Transportation Neil Goldschmidt in the Carter administration's final days. But the industry ran out of time in 1979 when American consumers, stampeded by gasoline shortages, demanded smaller, fuel-efficient cars.

In two years, foreign auto manufacturers nearly doubled their share of the U.S. market, cutting into the volume that the Big Three need to survive. The "shock" also disrupted a decades-old marketing strategy upon which the industry had built huge profits.

The industry's chief money-making tool had been to persuade Americans to buy bigger, fancier cars that carried larger profit margins. But in 1979, the low-profit small-car share of the

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Rather than bewailing a clearly nonexistent lack of investment capital, our corporate executives ought to look into the reasons for this decline in the efficiency of investment between 1950 and 1980. In some small measure, this decline may indeed have been caused by increased government regulations. But the main causes lie elsewhere. One factor undoubtedly is the frequency and severity of recessions during the 1970s. Another major explanation may be found in the passing of corporate leadership during the same 30-year period from experts in production and marketing to those in finance and accounting. The latter are more concerned with quick returns, tax strategies, and the exercise of financial power than with long-term innovation and efficient production. The multiplying corporate takeovers and mergers rarely make economic sense, but they can increase financial and market power (and executive pay). Bids for desirable takeover objects often lead to uneconomic waste of capital, and conglomerate forays into unrelated industries to tremendous losses and destruction or deformation of entire industries (most sadly, book publishing). No wonder doubts are beginning to be voiced about the quality of our corporate leadership.

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market jumped by more than 25 percent, capturing the bulk of the market.

"People argue that the American industry should have gone ahead—downsized—because after 1974 and '75 it became obvious where the industry was going," observed Fraser. "It wasn't obvious at all," he continued, "because in '76, '77, and '78, we were working at almost total capacity. The industry was sitting there and had to make a very simple decision: Commit the capacity of assembly plants to building cars on which we make $1,500 or $2,000 each—the large cars . . . or commit those facilities to making [small cars] that we can't sell or, when we do sell them, we can't make any profit on."

THE AUTO-MAKERS now are investing $70 billion in retooling and new factories to increase capacity and productivity. Revitalization will alter the old manufacturing face of Detroit, where one of the biggest proposed projects would create 6,000 jobs. The site is nestled near the center of the city, mostly inside the boundary of the "island" city of Hamtramck. There sits the abandoned, rotting 5 million-square-foot eight-story hulk of the "Dodge Main" plant, built in 1910 and operated for about 50 years by Chrysler.

GM has proposed clearing 465 acres here, including the plant, leveling 3,400 houses and 148 businesses and 16 churches. It wants to construct a 70-acre plant for assembling Cadillacs. Demolition began in December.

The human cost of revitalization—relocation for thousands—would be offset by the benefit of jobs for thousands. But, in the long run, the number of jobs lost in the industrywide transition will be staggering. Even if the American auto industry does recover, the process will take at least five years, according to Goldschmidt's Report to the President, *The U.S. Automobile Industry, 1980* (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 1981).

The auto workforce, one of the most prosperous in the manufacturing sector and best protected against short-term economic downturns, will lose as many as 200,000 jobs to automation—to more robots, especially in new plants—and to productivity gains, according to Goldschmidt.

Despite the effort, it is uncertain whether the U.S. auto-makers can drive the Japanese out of the marketplace without government restraints on imports. What is certain is that smaller cars will dominate and the industry must find a way to make a buck on them—by reasserting the "buy up" principle in the form of the "luxury" small car.

The Big Three, however, are at a severe disadvantage. Japanese cars carry a $1,000-$1,500 lower sticker price because of lower labor costs (the Japanese auto worker earns two-thirds as much as his American counterpart) and better productivity owing to management and technological advances.

The high cost of rebuilding will add to the debt structure of the U.S. auto-makers, making them even less flexible in a future price war with the Japanese.

Despite its disadvantaged position, the industry is displaying evidence that the seeds of change have been planted. The 1981 models are smaller and more fuel-efficient, and even luxury cars are being downsized—in time to meet the release of "pent-up" demand in the marketplace.

And the industry is displaying, finally, a recognition that problems do exist. "It was very, very difficult for the American auto industry to admit someone was doing something better than it was," said Fraser. □

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All this is not to deny that some firms are suffering from insufficient investment funds. This often is the consequence of disastrous management decisions (as in steel, auto, public utilities), of perennial market instability (as in the garment industry), and of more efficient foreign competition—or of a combination of these and other factors. To a much larger extent than is generally realized, not only Lockheed and Chrysler but many other companies also have received a boost in capital through government subsidies, directly in the form of loan guarantees and tax concessions or indirectly through import restrictions. Such subsidies may be unavoidable for political reasons; but, as Lester Thurow and others point out, they tend to reward the inefficient instead of encouraging the efficient segment of our economy.

As we have seen, there is no real overall shortage of investment capital. But other factors affect the will to invest and the choice of investment. When demand is slow, production capacity underused, and profits are falling during recession, there is no incentive for adding to capacity, or to R & D. In reality, there is no stronger motivation for investment than moderate economic growth supported by a steady economic public policy, permitting long-range planning for business as well as for the worker/consumer. Constant policy vacillations of a weak Administration, under the political pressures of powerful groups, or wild gyrations of interest rates have been *dis*incentive to investment. Rather, the combination of high interest rates and inflation has encouraged *mis*investment by deflecting funds away from productive projects (which cannot become profitable at over 20 percent interest) toward unproductive ventures promising quick profits. Thus investors have preferred to put their money into such things as casinos in Atlantic City, tax-sheltered gambles on oil wells and real estate, and into such purely speculative channels as options, art auctions, gold. Strangely enough, the inflationary effect of such speculative diversion of investment funds—notably on the price of land, and hence on housing and agricultural costs—seems to have escaped the notice of our conservative inflation fighters. They are too busy blocking government expenditures to be able to put idle labor (and idle capital) to productive work.

We can no longer afford the wasteful diversion of funds into speculative ventures and the equally wasteful duplication of investment in many areas. Their constantly rising cost in the form of lessened capital productivity is becoming too heavy a burden. And the remedy proposed by business economists—ever faster acceleration of depreciation for plants and machinery—only invites yet more waste, and thus shifts the burden onto the rest of the taxpayers.

A capital market solely guided by the fastest and highest return, where speculative ventures compete on an equal footing with needed goods and services, no longer fulfills its function.

If capitalists have to be bribed by tax and other government concessions to kindly invest in affordable housing rather than in gambling dens, and if they have to be guaranteed against the consequences of their *mis*investments—then they have forfeited their usefulness. Then the time has come for some form of government control over investment, or at least investment guidance within a framework of long-term planning as suggested by the Leontief group, or along the French pattern. Such control or guidance need not and ought not go beyond the 1,000 largest corporations. In view of a still ample capital formation, even an actual allocation of funds may not be necessary; the setting of priorities might suffice. It would, at least, bring some order into the existing jumble of multitudinous federal, state, and local investment subsidies. It might be supplemented by an updated version of FDR's Reconstruction Finance Corporation. At any rate, this would be the only form of supply-side economics that could be considered desirable.

Incidentally, with all the clamor for more investment in factories and machines, far too little attention is paid to investment in other forms of capital, notably the human one. Not only do we tolerate conditions that prevent a large number of black workers from applying their full skills. The U.S. is still well behind other Western countries in such fields as education in basic skills or preventive health care. The West German government, for example, systematically subsidizes further education for employees who wish to upgrade their skills in various fields, both in the technical and organizational areas. It recognizes the value of such a policy for the entire society. What a waste, by contrast, in an educational system that keeps perhaps a fifth of our youth on the lowest levels of skills and expectations; what a loss in man hours through preventable sickness, work accidents, labor strife, and low employee morale.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT from the Reagan administration? Both its conservative economic policymakers and its breezy young fiscal activists of the

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Kemp-Stockman stripe are ardent supply siders. The latter, insofar as they hope to stimulate the economy by their tax cut, seem to take a leaf out of Keynes. Indeed, they like to compare their proposal to John F. Kennedy's successful investment tax credit in 1962, followed up by the income tax cut of 1963-64. But JFK's investment tax credit was limited in scope and time, and pinpointed toward new equipment in order to encourage the updating of the industrial plant; his income tax relief was slanted toward the lower- and middle-income groups for maximum stimulation of demand. The resulting "trickle-up" effect toward investment was faster and surer than the "trickle-down" effect on demand expected from supply-side economics.

So far, the Kemp people have been mum about how their initial 10 percent tax cut is to be distributed among various taxpayer groups. But it is hard to see how they, as devoted supply siders, could resist the almost certain pressures to direct the tax cut toward stimulating saving over spending, and thus slant it toward the higher income groups. In addition, the SSE lobby is asking for further reductions in the corporate income tax and of the capital gains tax, and for a generous acceleration of depreciation for plant, equipment, and vehicles along the "10-5-3" formula strongly pushed by Big Business—and supported by a good many brainwashed liberals. In contrast to Kennedy's targeted investment tax credit, these *general* business tax-relief measures would encourage waste and speculation, without necessarily stimulating new productive investment, in the face of a continued lag in demand. In this form, supply-side economics represents little more than yet another disguise, in pseudo-scientific language, for a straight tax gift to the rich. □

Thomas B. Edsall

The 97th Congress: A Deep Shift to the Right

Just ten years ago, Senator Strom Thurmond, Republican of South Carolina, hired his first black congressional staff member. This was widely viewed as a recognition of the changing politics of the South, the accommodation of the segregationist, Dixiecrat Republican to the growing political muscle of blacks and other progressive forces. Now Thurmond is chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and contemplating significant modification or elimination of the 1964 Voting Rights Act.

Six years ago Senator Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina, actively considered abandonment of the Republican party and the formation of a new, conservative, third party. At the time, he had almost reached the conclusion that moderate, centrist forces—the "Gerald Ford wing"—were so entrenched in the GOP that conversion to an ideologically pure conservatism was impossible. Today Helms is not only chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee but also the Republican party's point man in the struggle to force party leaders to keep their promises to those who want to ban abortion and busing, permit voluntary school prayer, and place the United States on a footing where it is prepared to meet a challenge of war.

In less than a decade, Congress has not only abandoned the concept of using tax legislation for a modest redistribution of income from the rich to the poor. But, at this writing, Congress appears to be on the verge of moving in the opposite direction. The Reagan economic program, much of which has been favorably received by Congress, involves the elimination of benefits targeted to the poor and unemployed—the only income group to be singled out to absorb a significant portion of the budget cuts—while at the same time the major beneficiaries of the tax reductions will be corporations and the rich. Although some Democrats are complaining about the inequities in the Kemp-Roth tax cut, alterations of the bill are likely to be in the direction of further skewing in favor of the well-to-do with reductions in the inheritance tax and increased exemptions on earnings from savings and investments.

These shifts in a remarkably short period reflect

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the fluid qualities in American politics and the difficulties in anticipating what will take place in the near future. In 1974, for example, leaders of the corporate lobbying community in Washington expected an onslaught of legislation backed by labor and environmental groups, fears that, emotionally, were similar to those now voiced by the left. The corporate community—faced with the election of 74 new Democrats in 1974, deep public distrust of business activities in the wake of Watergate and related scandals, and the strong likelihood of the election of a Democratic president in 1976—initiated a massive mobilization. The Chamber of Commerce was revitalized; the Business Roundtable emerged as a dynamic political force. Fund-raising strategies became increasingly sophisticated, and the political action committee an integral part of over 1,000 corporate structures and of a nearly equal number of trade associations.

At the same time the political wing of the corporate community recognized the lobbying potential of its multiple branch offices, factories, suppliers, and buyers, spread throughout the country. Political leverage was to be gained by forming alliances with other corporations that shared an interest in a specific piece of legislation, thus submerging short-term competitive drives in order to coordinate legislative cooperation.

This development of political strength coincided with the growth of single-interest groups, the most powerful among them concerned with "social issues": abortion, busing for integration, school prayer, and a subset of such other "family" questions as homosexuality, sex education, and pornography. These interests have coalesced in the conservative Christian evangelical movement under such leaders as Jerry Falwell and James Robison.

Finally, and perhaps most important, the Democratic Party showed an inability to contend with one of the most difficult decades in the nation's history. The inability of the United States to define and control events was demonstrated in Vietnam, Angola, and Iran, and in the adoption of the OPEC countries' self-interested pricing and distribution policies. The manufacturing strength of the United States now is overshadowed by that of Japan and other countries, both in the Far East and in Europe. The political-psychic effects of the oil embargo are incalculable, and the subsequent price hikes have created a sense of governmental powerlessness in coping with inflation. In the face of these difficulties, the Democratic party vacillated in a fashion guaranteed to insure defeat. At a time when Democratic voting allegiances among traditional party voting groups had severely weakened (skilled labor, Catholics, Italians, and Irish, who had moved into the middle class), the party failed to recognize the importance of expanding its constituency, permitting defeat of such key legislation for this purpose as election-day registration and labor-law reform.

President Carter and congressional Democrats attempted to become leaders of a party of "ethical" or "procedural" reform—concentrating on such areas as public disclosure, restrictions on unearned outside income for elected officials, the replacement of state party conventions with open primaries, and the weakening of the powers of committee chairmen. These tactics helped only so long as the spate of Watergate and linked transgressions remained on the voters' minds. Corruption, in fact, is always the problem of the party in power, and advocacy of reform is, as a political tactic, effective as a dominant issue only in the process of taking power away from the incumbents who have abused it.

As the inflation rate approached 18 percent and the Carter administration failed to develop a coherent foreign policy, Democrats ended up haphazardly adopting positions already staked out by the Republicans. Distrust of the military establishment, even a critical stance, gave way to uncritical acceptance of sharply increased defense spending. Stepped-up procurement of weapons systems was substituted for policy development. To deal with inflation, the Administration and many congressional Democrats decided that an immediate attempt to balance the budget was essential. Not only was the attempt doomed to failure, but the drive placed Democrats in the position of scurrying to achieve what had been a traditional Republican goal. The Democratic leaders failed also to retain the party's modest tradition of directing its concerns toward the distributional issues inherent in cutting up either an expanding or shrinking pie. Democrats initiated a program of governmental sacrifice, but the losers turned out to be perhaps the most loyal Democratic constituency—the economically weak.

Well before the emergence of the postelection Republican dilemma—how to increase defense spending and balance the budget—Democrats had placed themselves in this squeeze, and the resolution was to cut benefits for food stamp recipients, to eliminate a section of the CETA jobs program, and to sharply reduce the low-income

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energy assistance program. The supposed mainstay of the liberal Democratic tradition, House Speaker Tip O'Neill, Jr. of Massachusetts, was so deeply rooted in the tradition of cutting up an ever-growing pie that he was unable to participate effectively in the budget-cutting debate.

IN THIS GENERAL FRAMEWORK, it becomes less surprising that the voters elected not only Ronald Reagan but a Republican Senate. New Majority Leader Howard H. Baker, Jr., Republican of Tennessee, foresees the possibility of at least ten years of GOP dominance of the Senate, a not impossible prospect. In the House, Democrats hold a 243 to 192 margin, meaning that a gain of 26 seats is enough to give the GOP a majority. Part of this shift will almost automatically occur through redistricting required before the 1982 election, entailing a shift of 17 House seats from Northeast and Midwest to South and West. The 25 congressional districts that have lost the most population are all held by urban Democrats, and 10 of them are black. Of the 25 largest gainers—where power will be increased through the addition of a district—now 15 are held by Republicans, and most of the 10 Democrats are conservatives representing districts that could easily shift to the GOP.

These factors are likely to offset the political consequences for the makeup of Congress in case there is no improvement in the economy under Reagan. If the economy significantly worsens, it is still unlikely that the Senate will return to the Democrats. Severe economic deterioration would probably prove to be a boon to House Democrats, as long as they avoid responsibility for undermining key Administration policies.

The Republicans in Congress are likely to run into trouble as they try to resolve a basic split within their party between what might be called the Baker wing and the Helms wing. Helms has made it clear that he intends to force the party to keep its commitments on highly divisive legislation—abortion, prayer, and busing—along with an intensive growth of the military.

Helms is a senator of importance, having become the de facto floor leader for almost all the conservative single-interest groups, while even such past stalwarts of the right as Orrin G. Hatch, Republican of Utah, and Paul Laxalt, Republican of Nevada, have started to moderate their views now they are in power. Helms has also started his own independent political action committee—the Congressional Club—which is beginning to carry considerable influence in North Carolina and was instrumental in electing a political nonentity, John East, to that state's other seat. In opposing the nomination of Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger and delaying Senate consideration of Deputy Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci, Helms has demonstrated a willingness to use his knowledge of arcane Senate rules to force the Republican leadership further to the right. For him, ideology supersedes party loyalty.

Republicans now are engaged in a debate about legislative strategy. In the Baker wing there is considerable reluctance to move forward on legislation that splits the electorate. This includes not only constitutional amendments on abortion and prayer but also legislation to severely weaken the regulatory process, particularly the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the gutting of civil rights bills, particularly affirmative action, and assaults on environmental bills, including the clean air and clean water acts. Even Hatch, an arch conservative who won his spurs by leading the successful filibuster against the Labor Law Reform bill, now as chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee has been sending out mixed signals. His first hearings were a relatively sympathetic inquiry into problems of women in the workplace, particularly their difficulties in obtaining equal pay for equal work. Hatch, a politician who has let the fantasy of seeking the presidency enter his mind, recognized in the election-poll results that half the union vote went to the Republican candidate. Consequently, he is having second thoughts on using his committee to eviscerate OSHA. He would prefer to see most of the attack conducted by the Administration through regulation-writing, selection of personnel, and weakening of enforcement.

Privately, there is widespread acknowledgment that pressing forward with prayer, antibusing, and antiabortion constitutional amendments is a politically dangerous process for the Republicans. As long as these amendments were bottled up in committee by a Democratic Congress, they were a goldmine for conservatives appealing to special interest groups for support and money. If, however, these amendments not only clear committee but appear likely to clear Congress, they run the risk of mobilizing women or revitalizing civil liberties groups and, on a larger scale, offending a broad, moderate segment of the electorate likely to be disturbed by extensive tinkering with the Constitution.

The Helms argument goes as follows: (1) the

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danger of mobilizing a stronger opposition is exaggerated, because most of it will consist of the remnants of the Democratic party's McGovern wing; (2) the conservative single-interest groups provided the margin of victory in 1980, and a failure to honor the debt to them will result in their abandoning the GOP; (3) congressional passage of conservative constitutional amendments may help mobilize the left, but it will also give new impetus to the right. Once through Congress, the battle moves to the state legislatures where, with fights on the ERA and on state abortion laws, these groups on the right have demonstrated growing strength.

Once a majority, the Republicans have almost as much potential for internal conflict as the Democrats. If the Helms wing becomes dominant, the remnants of the once powerful Eastern Establishment faction—Charles Mathias, Jr. (Md.), John Chafee (R.I.), H. John Heinz, 3rd (Pa.), and so on—will become increasingly vocal in their dissent. A failure to take many of the conservative social and regulatory initiatives will alienate not only Helms but also freshman Republicans elected with strong support from the Moral Majority.

The conservative Democrats, mostly from the South and Southwest, have already banded together to revive the conservative coalition. In the House, the 39-member Democratic Conservative Forum has already used its leverage—primarily the threat of voting with Republicans to oust Tip O'Neill as speaker—to gut O'Neill's authority. At present, he has no real strategy to deal with Republican control of the Senate and the presidency except accommodation. The emergence of the Conservative Forum as a forceful group has damaged O'Neill's chance of retaining a semblance of control over substantive bills once they reach the floor. In the Senate, the conservative Democratic faction is less organized, but the ten active participants have declared their unwillingness to follow the Democratic leadership on strengthened fair housing legislation and other liberal undertakings.

GIVEN THE DISARRAY of the Democrats, the only development assuring their party's resurgence would be a major failure of the Republicans, particularly in economics. It is possible that the supply-side proposals and other tax measures may create temporarily, from one particular angle, the impression of a revived economy. At the same time, however, the proposals, including both tax measures and budgetary cutbacks in transfer programs, are almost sure to increase inequities in both wealth and income. The increased inequities will be felt most deeply by two groups, organized labor—and those dependent on food stamps and other transfer programs, the poorest people who are also the least likely to vote and consequently the least able to influence the elective process. The tax measures, including both across-the-board cuts and the lowering of rates on capital gains and inheritance, will be of most benefit to those on the highest rungs of the economic ladder, particularly the tiny fraction of the population, 2.6 percent, that holds 75 percent of the nation's wealth.

If the Reagan program fails to produce prompt improvement in two major industries, auto and steel, the political repercussions are likely to be felt quickly by Republicans running for office in Northern, industrialized states. They will have to explain to union voters, many of whom voted for Reagan last November, why they remain out of work and are unable to receive either extended unemployment benefits or trade adjustment assistance. These two programs are prime targets in the Administration's drive to eliminate $41.4 billion from the 1982 budget.

Just as, in recent years, Republican growth has coincided geographically with the economic growth areas, the party's fund-raising abilities have taken giant steps beyond those of the Democratic party. In the last election, the Republican Senate Campaign Committee raised just under $20 million, compared to the $1.6 million raised by its Democratic counterpart. The GOP House Committee raised just over $13 million, compared to $1.1 million contributed for Democratic House candidates. These disparities are likely to grow as Republicans appeal to a constituency far better equipped to produce monthly party payments, soon to be channeled through such credit cards as Mastercharge and VISA. The same effective channeling of money has taken place for a host of conservative intellectual centers, including the Heritage Foundation, the Hoover Institute, and the Institute of Contemporary Studies.

For the Republicans there are only two sources of criticism that have institutional permanence in Washington: the Democratic party and the press. The Democratic party is finding it difficult to raise money and revive its own intellectual resources; as of this writing, Democratic leaders are not even able to agree on the formation of a Democratic Coordinating Council to set general national goals. As for the press, increased specialization has resulted in a deterioration of the modest adversary tradition carried on by a minority of print journal-

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ists. The factors of significantly improved salaries and the dominance of news coverage by television—an inherently superficial medium inhibited by a need to please sponsors—have weakened a commitment to issues of justice and equity.

During the next four years, perhaps the key element in the debate over the proposed revitalization of U.S. industry will be the distribution of the burden to finance this process. The issue will become increasingly salient at a time when radically different approaches to the economy, regulation, and budgetary expenditures are to be initiated by a party with deep roots in the business community. □

Roger Wilkins

For Blacks, Reagan Means "A Chilling Effect"

Ronald Reagan's victory has let black Americans know in a clear and visceral way what civil libertarians mean when they talk, in other contexts, about "a chilling effect." It reminds older blacks of times and attitudes they had hoped had disappeared forever from American life and thought. It has made some younger blacks suspect that the uproar about civil rights in the 1950s and '60s was overblown.

But, in the end, the advent of the Reagan administration may serve to spur a new period of creativity among blacks to fashion new attacks on the searing problems that still afflict large segments of the black population.

It is useful here to look back at how America felt in the late '30s and through the '40s—the period when the psyches of the people who now make up the leadership cadre among blacks were being formed.

Magazines—*LIFE*, *LOOK*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Colliers*, and the *Ladies' Home Journal*—were our television. They told us what American life was—what people were doing, what the latest fashions were, how fantasies were evolving, and who we were as a people. Black people were not depicted in those portraits of America; not in the fiction, not in the advertisements, not in the serious articles. As in the movies, Americans were white—except for a few buffoons or loyal servants. Blacks allowed to speak on public issues were expected to please white listeners or risk being branded "uppity" and thus beyond the pale of civilized discourse.

The Congress was dominated by a coalition of Southern Democrats and conservative Republicans. The Southerners were openly hostile to black concerns and the Republicans were indifferent, at best. Hubert Humphrey was not a national figure early in that period and the voice most often heard in the Senate on black issues came out of the deformed and hating spirit of Theodore G. Bilbo of Mississippi. Black servicemen who were expected to risk their lives for this country in World War II often found that they were treated worse in the South than German or Italian prisoners of war.

Nor was it against the generally accepted codes of behavior for whites to be hostile and even rude to blacks, not just in the South, but all over the nation. As late as 1952, for example, smart campus shops in Ann Arbor, Michigan, would not permit black women to try on clothing as white women, of course, were accustomed to doing. Segregation, whether formal or informal, clearly shaped the black psychic relationship to this country.

It is no wonder, then, that some of the blacks who lead this country now have, in times past, felt themselves to be tentative Americans. Many in that generation have recounted the confusion and embarrassment they felt when, representing this country abroad, they were challenged by Africans about their loyalties and identities. Because the cultural experiences of their young years had so clearly defined America as a white country some of them were a little astonished to hear themselves say, "I am an American."

Things have changed since those days. People

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who argue that the civil rights struggles whites and blacks pursued from the mid-'50s and through the early '70s accomplished nothing are fools. A lot of blacks became psychically comfortable being Americans. While some black Americans had real qualms about Jesse Owens's unabashed expressions of patriotism after the 1936 Olympics, very few were concerned about similar sentiments from Sugar Ray Leonard after he won the gold medal in 1976.

That change in attitude reflects changes in the real world. People who can remember being called "boy" earlier in their professional careers and being mistaken for delivery people are now often called "sir" in places of public accommodation and are at ease attending meetings in the Cabinet Room of the White House or sitting in corporate boardrooms. Black life has improved remarkably in this country. Perhaps the most indicative statistic about black life-chances in America is that there are approximately three times as many blacks attending college now as there were in 1960. Another measure at the other end is that as late as 1968 a team of doctors could find real hunger and malnutrition in America. By 1978, that had largely been eliminated.

Given those changes in comprehensible lifetimes, it was not unreasonable for a significant part of a generation of blacks to expect in the early '70s that unevenly but steadily the nation would continue to attack our terrible racial inequities. More than a third of the black population still lives in poverty and more than 40 percent of all black children are coming out of the public school systems with reading and computing skills that are inadequate for anything but the most marginal participation in American economic life. Moreover, as we moved through the '70s it began to appear that a smaller and smaller proportion of the educated black population was actively involved with the plight of the poorest blacks.

It appeared in the mid-'70s that a fairly articulate and vociferous segment of the white population had decided that the civil rights war had been won and that continuing a commitment of public resources to alleviate civil rights problems was harmful to America. Blacks had never for a moment entertained the idea that just because public discourse on race had become more civilized or places of public accommodation more accessible, racism was dead. They recognized its new shapes in the formulations of the neoconservatives and were appalled as those views began to seep into the body politic.

But, of course, the neoconservatives never labeled themselves antiblack. They just followed former Senator George Aiken's formula for Vietnam: Declare victory and get out. People who were unprepared to declare victory were labeled old-fashioned sentimentalists, single-issue sloganeers, and preference seekers. One of the most prominent characteristics of racism is the mechanism of denial. The neoconservatives proved themselves masters of denial that racism existed and thus were the most elusive and sophisticated opponents of those who sought an enlarged American commitment to racial and economic justice.

BEFORE REAGAN'S ELECTION, blacks and their allies could console themselves with the thought that such true conservatives as Jesse Helms and the *Commentary*-style neoconservatives were an operative minority in American politics. They could, if they weren't paying attention, lull themselves to sleep with the thought that the great mass of the American people were asleep, but when the crunch came, they would have generous instincts and that the momentum for decency was still alive in the land.

Reagan's election and the composition of the new Senate suggest that this is not the case. Though Reagan himself seems an amiable fellow, a lot of those who rode his coattails don't seem so amiable and neither do a number of people filtering into the Administration. And Reagan's amiability surely has limits. He is, after all, the candidate who in 1976 evoked the image of the "big buck" buying steaks with food stamps at the supermarket.

Former UN Ambassador Andrew J. Young was quoted as saying in rather lurid terms during the campaign that an America governed by Ronald Reagan would be profoundly inhospitable to blacks and their aspirations. Young was attacked by the Republicans and repudiated by the Democrats. While it is surely an overstatement to suggest, as Young did, that Reagan's election would be a signal that it is again "all right to kill niggers," blacks who remember the old days are already reminded of them now, just a few months after the election.

Even before November 4, black Americans were feeling less physically secure because of a series of sniper killings of black men across the Middle West, the murders of several black men in Buffalo, and the disappearance and death of a lot of black children in Atlanta. As of this writing, though some of those killings have clearly been

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attributed to whites, it is far from clear that all of them were committed by white hands. Nevertheless, the deaths were enough to send shocks of alarm through black communities. A series of stabbings of blacks in New York City, Buffalo, and Rochester by assailants who were described as white did nothing to allay those concerns.

But the politics that crawled out from under the rocks in the wake of the election was even more appalling. Just the notion of Strom Thurmond serving as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee was enough to frighten black people. His cheerful declarations that he wanted to enact a death penalty law, terminate the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and strip the federal courts of jurisdiction to deal with any matters affecting education was pure Bilbo talk without the vulgar words.

Jesse Helms wants to cut back the Food Stamp program and Orrin Hatch wants to cripple affirmative action and curtail activities of agencies that attempt to curb discrimination in the workplace. The Heritage Foundation has recommended elimination of the program providing legal services for the poor. Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, in a bid for leadership of the Democratic party, termed some of Senator Edward M. Kennedy's ablest assistants "extreme left-wingers," and a group of Democratic senators began meeting to nudge the party rightward, toward what they termed "the mainstream" of American politics.

Astonishingly, Edwin Meese III found time to take nine hours during the period when he was running the government transition to listen to a conference of black conservatives. After hearing them denounce affirmative action, support a subminimum wage, and attack the "dependency" fostered by welfare programs, he declared them the black voices of the future. He said the black leaders with constituencies with whom President-elect Reagan had just met—unlike Vernon Jordan, Benjamin Hooks, et al., the conservatives have no known constituencies in black America—represented the ideas of the past.

That, as much as anything, was a reminder to blacks with memories, of how things had been in the past. In the 1930s and '40s and in the South after that, whites thought it was perfectly acceptable to pick among black voices and to choose the most compatible as the true black spokesmen. Like Meese, a number of conservative commentators have been emboldened to instruct blacks who their real spokesmen are, where their real interests lie, and what issues it is appropriate for them to pursue.

Now this is not to suggest that there should be no debate about the means of achieving social justice. It is to say that in far too many instances blacks are being told that a strategy—busing or affirmative action, for example—is wrong, but are not offered alternative means of achieving desegrated education or racial justice in the workplace. Since blacks know to a moral certainty that those goals are far from achieved, they have to conclude that those who would deny them the available roads toward those ends without suggesting alternate means have, at best, no real interest in black rights.

Not only is there a change in the political atmosphere that harks back to earlier and less hospitable times, there is also a change in the feel of the country. When Secretary Haig indicates that somehow a concern about terrorism requires a diminution of conern about human rights, when Korea's strong man is the second head of state to be welcomed to the new White House, and when there is a gushing of tough talk from Washington about the Soviet Union, the American voice is coming from certain clearly defined places. This is a voice that comes from the country-club locker rooms across America. It is rock 'em sock 'em jock talk devoid in large measure of subtlety or nuance.

Even white commentators observed that during the inauguration the capital was awash with people who looked like the nation's monied country-club set. An observer wandering through the crowd at the Distinguished Ladies' Reception felt as if he had stepped back into the elegance, arrogance, and whiteness that he remembered from the times when *LIFE* went to a fancy party.

Most blacks don't know, of course, what white people say in the privacy of their country clubs. But we imagine that nigger jokes are sometimes told there, that disdain is expressed for the untidiness and squalor of inner-city life, and that there are even comments about big bucks freeloading on food stamps.

Though sophisticated blacks don't expect Strom Thurmond and Orrin Hatch's crudest political fantasies to come true, they do expect to have to spend a great deal of energy in the next few years keeping them in the realm of fantasy. There is no question that Ronald Reagan and David Stockman are going to cut away at programs that make life more bearable for the poor in America. When blacks argue that even if supply-side economics lives up to Jack Kemp's most optimistic dreams, America's minority poor will still have to be protected from racism, a lack of skills and the ineffi-

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ciencies of the economy, they will be told that they are slavishly devoted to old issues and old ideas.

BUT EVEN IN THIS NEW ERA, which feels so chillingly old, there is some reason to have hope. Throughout American history, blacks have proved amazingly adaptable to adverse circumstances. In the Nixon, Ford, and Carter years, the black issue had receded from public consciousness. Now editors and news directors around the country are beginning to realize that the Reagan administration's relationship to the black community is a big story that requires sustained attention.

Black activists and politicians, like other liberals, had grown lazy with the illusion that Roosevelt's political arithmetic was forever. Little creative and strategic thought had been devoted to the terrible issues and effects of the still-enormous black poverty or to the relative economic impotence of the entire black community in America. The voices of conservatives, both black and white, could be ignored when the political issue was how much more of what we've already been doing can we get the government to do.

Now the conservatives cannot be ignored and they may just have a good idea or two. Even if they have no good ideas, they have the power to make blacks rethink all the old programmatic ideas they have taken for granted over the last decade and a half. It will be a time when the smartest blacks will adapt the opportunities that the conservatives make available much in the same way a great football offense adapts to whatever a good defense makes available.

Finally, and most important, the new mean mood in the country may force a new dialogue to take place in black America. New strategies can evolve and new balances struck between what America must do for its most vulnerable people and what black people can and should do for each other. □

Howard R. Weiner and Luther Carpenter

"Urban Enterprise Zones": Hope or Chimera?

The Kemp-Garcia Urban Jobs and Enterprise Zones bill is a legislative proposal bobbing in the wake of Kemp-Roth and the monetarist ideas that absorb the Reagan administration's attention. It is of interest because it is the only conservative proposal even to notice the problems of urban America, and a variant of ideas more commonly associated with liberal interventionists and city planners. These sources of interest are symbolized in the bill's co-sponsorship by Robert Garcia, a liberal Democrat from the South Bronx.

The bill would empower local governments to designate deteriorated areas as "local enterprise zones." The local government would then promise to reduce real estate taxes by 5 percent for a four-year period. The federal government, in turn, would confer several benefits on companies in these zones: a 50 percent reduction in Social Security taxes (on the worker's share as well as on the company's); a 50 percent reduction in capital gains tax (reducing the maximum tax to only 10 percent of the capital gain); very generous depreciation formulas; a 15 percent reduction in corporate tax; and a greater possibility of being declared a Foreign Trade Zone.

In two major ways Kemp-Garcia represents an advance in conservative thinking. It admits (1) that markets must be manipulated to obtain socially desirable results; and (2) that local governments must plan. However, these theoretical advances are interpreted very narrowly and don't seem likely to generate urban reindustrialization.

The results are likely to be modest, mainly because of Kemp-Garcia's reliance on small business. An economist for the conservative Heritage Foundation speculates that the bill would benefit "basement businesses" such as laundries, garment shops, and bakeries. But one cannot envision laundries and bakeries springing up if their prospective market is the deteriorated area itself; there

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simply isn't the local purchasing power. Garment shops might be more promising, since their product could be "exported" to affluent America. But then, one must consider the rate of failure among small businesses—and the fact that even Nixon's effort at "Black Capitalism" involved greater levels of financial support than Kemp-Garcia would offer. Furthermore, if the only beneficiaries are "Mom and Pop" stores, no secondary jobs will be created, and thus the project will not have much effect on the neighborhood. Medium-sized firms, however, might have a better chance of surviving and would also provide more career opportunities.

There is another reason for expecting only a modest response to the incentives offered by Kemp-Garcia: they will not match the concessions offered to entrepreneurs by small towns in the South and the West. These conditions include the construction of factories, cheap utilities, low rents, docile labor, and long-term reductions in real estate tax.

While we don't expect dramatic results from stimulating small businesses, the goal of increasing jobs for residents of deteriorating neighborhoods is too important, and the estimated cost ($1.5 billion) too small to justify unqualified opposition to the Kemp-Garcia bill. Nonetheless, there are many serious criticisms to make:

- Enterprise zones should provide a "trickle-down" mechanism, but the benefits won't trickle down to the unemployed, the working poor, and the young. Companies claiming these concessions should agree to hire and train *local* residents.
- Kemp-Garcia's reliance on tax concessions will make our tax system even more unfair and irrational; our economic system is so riddled with tax exemptions and allowances that their package will make little difference.
- There are potential side effects that could cancel any possible gains from enterprise zones. Small businesses might move from old but functioning neighborhoods to nearby enterprise zones, for example, from Long Island City to the South Bronx. Co-Op City in the Bronx and Starrett City in Brooklyn had this negative effect upon housing in the Grand Concourse and in central Brooklyn. One might guard against this by making the benefits apply only to new companies or to the net expansion, and not to moving costs.
- Kemp and Garcia are not really thinking in terms of the long-range health of deteriorating neighborhoods; they are simply providing a new gimmick to increase some entrepreneurs' profits. Evidence for this charge is provided by the Heritage Foundation economist who envisions that the more successful businesses will later move to more "desirable" areas. We suggest that any company that moves out of an enterprise zone should have to repay its benefits into a revolving fund that could be used to provide new businesses to take its place in the area.
- A more serious objection to Kemp-Garcia is that urban enterprise zones could bring to depressed American cities the problems of modernization that one sees in Third World countries. Modernization often involves a substantial input of sophisticated machinery and outside construction contractors. Management teams usually set goals and working conditions. If business succeeds, the worker gains the appearance of accomplishment—but not the substance. Local residents are hired for dead-end jobs that keep the "riff-raff" off the streets but do not lead to actual careers—while the managers stay outside the community. The probable results are disenchantment and alienation.

Liberals and democratic socialists deem alienation and disenchantment bad in themselves. Kemp may or may not care, but he should if he wants his program to have any real consequence. Alienation and disenchantment can prevent those residents of deteriorating areas who want to get ahead from responding to Kemp-Garcia's initiatives. When we talked randomly with ambitious students from the South Bronx, they communicated a cautious feeling that the plan was worth trying. However, they were jaded by the failure of so many earlier governmental and private plans. The Republicans, with negligible community roots and strong

In Our Next Issue:

H. Brand

The Economic Situation of American Workers

This carefully documented study shows that there has in recent years been a decline in the real wages of the American workers. In other respects, the economic situation of workers, both organized and unorganized, has worsened.

An article of special importance for trade unionists! □

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corporate ties, are to be watched, they feel, with even more suspicion than the familiar Democratic "poveriticians."

If urban enterprise zones are to stimulate small and medium-size businesses and revitalize communities, workers will have to obtain conditions that will let them develop a sense of dedication to the workplace and the neighborhood. Housing must be improved, to let workers feel they are getting somewhere. They must feel that five or ten years down the road there will be rungs on a career ladder. But Mom and Pop stores offer few such opportunities. To prevent disenchantment, unions had best be consulted in advance about job titles, hiring conditions, and special rules dispensations. Otherwise, they might resist working conditions at a later stage of negotiations and, in turn, become scapegoats for failure.

TRUE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WOULD require the active participation of local people in the planning of the enterprise zone. The choice of shops or factories should be related to community needs and the labor pool, which is more skilled than most businessmen realize. Local labor unions and development organizations must be involved at each stage.

We have seen repeatedly what happens if development is not comprehensive. Public housing projects by themselves were an incomplete answer to the complex residential, employment, educational, and urban service needs of inner-city populations. President Carter's recent offer to rebuild Charlotte Street in the South Bronx failed because it did not include jobs. Economic conservatives point to the renovation of some neighborhoods by market forces; but the benefits often fail to reach the original inhabitants, who have been driven out in the course of development.

This conclusion—that comprehensive planning is necessary to make tax reductions useful—also follows from examining the Kemp-Garcia assumption that tax concessions, by themselves, would remove a major deterrent to entrepreneurs. But this assumption comes to seem implausible as soon as one realizes what one has to do to start a small business. First, since banks will give large depositors a couple of percentage points over the quoted rates for six-month certificates of deposit, a successful entrepreneur would have to earn more than a 15 percent return on capital. If one compares this with normal returns on manufacturing capital of approximately 10 percent, one becomes skeptical about whether tax manipulations can really bring many jobs to depressed areas. And then, entrepreneurs must raise additional capital to supplement their initial capital—in the face of a 19.5 percent prime rate. Real estate costs are another deterrent. Even if they were low in a deteriorated area, one would expect them to skyrocket once it is designated an enterprise zone, and property owners see a chance to cash in. In these ways, market forces are stacked against productive enterprises in decaying urban areas. Tax cuts alone won't offset them.

Comprehensive planning is needed to control these market forces and provide other, useful supports for new businesses. Many large American cities now possess experienced development agencies and neighborhood groups. Local governments can help entrepreneurs find suitable locations, often in buildings abandoned by landlords. Existing "sweat equity" programs can help workers find housing near their jobs. In Britain, for example, several local authorities own public centers that house small workshops and the secretarial and accounting services they need. Publicly owned or semipublic industrial parks are another proven option.

Public services can play crucial roles in a genuine development. Police protection is necessary to give small businesses a chance to function. Some of our students who have worked in Model Cities construction projects report that these were plagued by pilferage. Cooperative education programs, which already exist in many high schools and community colleges, can assist with the recruitment and training of workers. Transportation is an important part of the infrastructure, including mass transportation for workers and rail and water transportation for raw materials and finished goods. Many manufacturing areas now need substantial investment to restore goods transport to the standards of 1955; without it, new businesses cannot compete.

Local utilities could do their share by providing gas, electricity, and telephone services at reduced rates; these costs are much higher in most old industrial cities than in the Sunbelt. And a consortium of local banks could provide capital and credit at lower cost, thus overcoming one of the biggest obstacles to entrepreneurs, along with the other banking services that are often unavailable in run-down areas.

The federal government must not be allowed to shirk its share of the responsibility for comprehensive development. Renovating housing in or near urban enterprise zones requires funds that local governments do not have.

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But even if enterprise zones are implemented in the most comprehensive and sensitive manner, the difficulties are formidable. Take the case of Zingone. Back in 1975, Zingone, a major Italian developer, sought to build an industrial park in the South Bronx. He was impressed with the dock and rail facilities, the available labor pool, and the desire of New York politicians to improve a deteriorating area. Zingone's company had built European shopping centers and prefabricated factories. Zingonia, near Milan, is Europe's largest private new town. Yet the whole project came unstuck before anything was ever built. Unforeseen complications in acquiring the Penn Central's Harlem River yards, New York's deteriorating financial condition, problems in assembling land, lack of cooperation from the appropriate unions, and a myriad of bureaucratic permit problems convinced Zingone that his efforts would never bear fruit. Any local government that wants to obtain economic development will have to cope with similar problems.

Community planners who want to assist local development will have to —

- try to amend the Kemp-Garcia bill to require local participation;
- create matching funds for local authorities' use for planning, police, education, infrastructure;
- protect existing federal grant programs for economic development;
- insist that companies availing themselves of the legislation to hire and train local workers;
- require that benefits be paid back to local government if a company leaves an enterprise zone.

If the Kemp-Garcia bill is passed, the planners will have to work hard in neighborhood groups and local development agencies to get any results out of it. By itself, the bill is mostly wishful thinking. □

Michael Walzer

The Courts, The Elections, and the People

Among many liberals and leftists, the deepest worry generated by Reagan's victory is the thought of the Supreme Court justices he is likely to appoint. That seems to me a misplaced worry, but it does reflect the enormous importance the Court has come to have in our political process and the generally progressive role it has played since the 1950s. For three decades now, the federal courts have been the dominant agency for social change in the United States, far outdistancing in both zeal and effectiveness the Congress, the parties, the unions, interest groups of all kinds. And there, I think, is a deeper cause for worry. For judicial activism on this scale stands at some remove from democratic politics, and whatever its immediate effects, it doesn't work over the long haul to strengthen democratic institutions. Indeed, Reagan's victory is as much a consequence of judicial activism as it is a threat to the existence of a "progressive" Supreme Court.

The first reason why Reagan's appointments are unlikely to be disastrous is the sheer unpredictability of judicial decision-making. Judges were not made independent for nothing. Unless he appoints hacks, in the strongest sense of that word, Reagan is likely to find that judges, once appointed, are unresponsive to political signals from the White House. They will go their own way, determined more by the (changing) character of the legal profession and the law schools, and by their bargaining with fellow-justices, than by any simple right-wing ideology. Still, given any imaginable Reagan appointments, we can anticipate a slow rightward drift—revealed most coherently in a growing willingness to accommodate rather than challenge state and local governments in such

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areas as school integration, criminal procedure, pornography, and so on. This will certainly result in political and administrative decisions that liberals will have to oppose. But it is worth asking just how our opposition should be focused. On the appointment of conservative judges who are unlikely to overrule local officials? Or on the local officials who actually *make* the bad decisions?

These questions suggest a second, and more important point. Victories in the courts are cheap. They don't require the mobilization of political forces; they are not the work of a party or movement. All that is necessary is a lawyer and an argument. Over the last several decades the liberal-left has become highly dependent on victories of this sort. Unable to build a movement, unable to win elections or to work our will through legislative coalitions, we have increasingly resigned ourselves to a passive role: not activists, but litigants. Or, perhaps, we have been such successful litigants that we have hardly had to be activists. The courts have made us lazy. In any case, we have been the beneficiaries of judicial activism. We have won victories far beyond our political base—and this over a very wide range of issues. Civil rights, school integration, school prayer, affirmative action, criminal law, capital punishment, prison reform, electoral reform, abortion, pornography: in all these areas, with only the partial exception of the first, victories have come not because of the political strength of the left but because of the persuasiveness of its lawyers.

THE CASE OF THE RIGHT has been exactly the opposite. Whereas *we* have won in court, again and again, and failed to build a movement, *they* have lost, again and again, and organized outside. In almost all the areas I have listed, conservative activists have put together committees, alliances, even single-issue parties, at local as well as national levels: an extraordinary proliferation of groups, which participatory democrats might well envy. One of the things that happened in 1980, and that was reflected in the election results, was a democratic mobilization on the issues. A mobilization of rightist, not leftist, forces—and a "moral" mobilization too, building on fear and prejudice as much as on economic interest. Of course, the outcome of the election was shaped most importantly by the troubles of the economy. People voted their interests or what they thought were their interests. But it would be a mistake to overlook the extent to which Reagan was helped, and many senatorial contests decided, by groups of indignant citizens drawn together in response to Supreme Court decisions on such things as busing and school prayer. Nor is it enough to talk only of the money that was spent by these new right-wing groups. There was a great deal of money spent (and it would be interesting to know in detail where it came from), but the right has always been well-financed. This year, time and energy were spent as well, and in amounts that, years ago, only the left could command.

It may not be so awful, then, if judicial decisions start going the other way. Or rather, particular

Not All the News Is so Bad . . .

Lots of griping in this section on Reaganland, isn't there? But what can you expect from a magazine called *Dissent*?

Still, we don't want to deprive our readers of a positive note. Carl Gershman, leader of "Social Democrats USA," has gone to work for the Reagan administration. He will serve as assistant to the new ambassador to the UN, Jeane Kirkpatrick, a lady already famous for her tolerance of "moderately repressive" right-wing authoritarian governments in Latin America.

Now, please: don't start up with your old-fashioned socialist notions that it's bad for one of our boys—well, almost one—to take a job with a reactionary Administration. We need, says everyone, new ideas. And one new idea is that Gershman can be useful.

Let's say Ms. Kirkpatrick is up there at the UN, anesthetizing the General Assembly with a recital from back issues of *Commentary*. She stumbles for a moment. She needs a *dialectical* point to justify support of the Argentine military, for in Argentina right-wing terrorism can't really be said to have killed people in more than the thousands. And where will she get this point? Gershman to the rescue!

Or let's say the new Assistant Secretary of State for [that is, Against] Human Rights Ernest Lefever needs a quotation from Engels or Kautsky. Whom will he turn to? Gershman! Not that Gershman may be so familiar with the texts himself, but at least he'd know whom to phone. . . .

We expect a lot from Carl Gershman. We believe he will carry on fearlessly in the great tradition of Ramsey MacDonald.

Our Diplomatic Correspondent

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decisions will indeed be awful, but they may teach at the same time a useful lesson. Social progress depends upon political mobilization. In a democracy, there is no substitute for the people. Judges making decisions *in loco populi* cannot create a stable or a strong liberalism; they cannot build the infrastructure of belief, commitment, and organization on which democratic left politics ultimately depends. By themselves, the judges merely invite a populist reaction of the kind we have just seen. □

Bernard Rosenberg

The Unions Today: Trouble, Problems, Conflict

Historically, this is a big year for the labor movement. A century ago Samuel Gompers, aged 31, helped to create the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions. That little group merged five years later with the American Federation of Labor at its first convention in Columbus, Ohio. Gompers, elected president, was voted the princely sum of $1,000 a year plus traveling expenses.

The centennial celebration is underway, but more than one friend of labor will participate with a heavy heart. Others, for odd reasons, will simply rejoice. Philip Shabecoff of the *New York Times* seems to be such a person. Or so we were bound to conclude last January 11 upon spotting a *Times* headline, "Labor and Business Amity," accompanied by a visual in the form of a gaily lighted birthday cake. Topping the cake's candied surface was a symbol of an executive and a worker locking arms in fraternal embrace.

Most of Shabecoff's article was written in the spirit of these embellishments. Yes, the UAW has made common cause with the Chrysler Corporation to save a miserably managed company from the bankruptcy it deserves. And yes, Sol Chaikin, head of the ILGWU, is impressed with the "cooperation" he has found among a host of bosses in the apparel industry, which like the auto industry is threatened by a flood of "cheap" imports. It is perhaps a little surprising that Chaikin should preen himself on the nature of that cooperation: "Some of the most notorious antiunion manufacturers regularly go up to Capitol Hill with us" to plead his cause and theirs. But what the hell, amity's a beautiful thing.

Shabecoff did take me aback with a quotation from Glenn Watts, president of the Communications Workers of America. Watts predicts that as this nation rebuilds its industrial base (any day now under one great Chief Executive or another), "the convergence of interests between labor and management will continue." Convergence over what? Robots and computers? Further unemployment? Greater inflation? Microtechnology? Making sure that service jobs go the way of factory jobs? Subminimum wages for the young? Continued transformation of Youngstowns into ghost towns? Scuttling OSHA? Union busting, one growth industry that flourishes luxuriantly even in our depressed economy? On the principle of collective bargaining itself—in greater jeopardy than at any time since 1935? Or repeal of *pre*-New Deal legislation like the Davis-Bacon Act of 1931 (and the "little" Davis-Bacon acts in several states), which set wage floors on government-financed construction projects?

Toward the end of his piece Shabecoff hurriedly refers to some of these matters. They are enough to refute his thesis. And they are, heaven help us, sources of *conflict*. Shabecoff himself notes that conservatives view the recent election "as a mandate to press on with a long-deferred clipping of labor's wings." Does anyone know a more effective way to perform that operation than to foster a certain kind of "harmony"? A. H. Raskin, the retired *New York Times* labor reporter, is troubled by all this. He worries about the "buddy-buddy" attitude that got unions nowhere under Jimmy Carter and could be ruinous under Reagan. With the proportion of organized workers down from a peak of 30 percent in 1955 to 20 percent at this moment and with the industrial workers down to

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30 percent of those who are organized, concentrated corporate power has seldom been a more formidable antagonist.

OBVIOUSLY, HEAVY INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION—meaning autos along with steel (soon to be plastics), rubber, glass, chrome and related commodities, accounting for every sixth or seventh job in the United States—will never recover its labor-intensive character. Even with Chrysler still afloat, 300,000 auto workers are jobless. What good can accommodation do them?

"Buy American" is a slogan around which certain unions and their natural opponents have been able to coalesce. But protectionism is a palliative even less likely to shore up the American economy today than when Herbert Hoover embraced it. This time tariff barriers can only save jobs that will in any case soon be liquidated by the hundred thousands. With less foreign competition in autos, steel, footwear and textiles, prices and profits will really soar. Won't other units in the AFL-CIO see this as a threat to their interests?

If there is another large sphere in which such cozy arrangements appeal to labor leaders—with the shining exception of William Winpisinger of the Machinists—it can be found in arms production. Winpisinger has argued courageously for the conversion of our essentially wartime economy to more useful purposes. Why he can be praised only privately by his more enlightened colleagues one learns from a national survey conducted by the AFL-CIO among its members last July. After one reads the findings, it becomes hard to withhold all sympathy from a cautious union leader who says that a disheartening number of workers, especially white workers, in his local sympathize with the Moral Majority, that they supported Proposition 13 in California and would be ready to emulate it elsewhere.

You discover from this survey that 65 percent of union members favor a constitutional amendment to require a balanced budget; 60 percent are opposed to the Panama Canal Treaty; 51 percent are against imposing strict handgun controls; 44 percent object to legal abortion. These are four of five "single issues" tested in the poll. Defense spending is the fifth and most "potent." About it, an in-house statement reads:

> Seventy-two percent of our members are against cuts in defense, and 22 percent say they would vote against a candidate who disagreed with them on this question even if they agreed on everything else.

On most "single issues" exploited by the Republicans last November, even the more conservative labor leaders appear to be ahead of their constituency. But not on "defense spending." Lane Kirkland was as enthusiastic as George Meany about the Vietnam War. He is a charter member of the Committee on the Present Danger. He goes along with the current excesses on defense policy, which assume that if you simply spend more and more billions of dollars on weapons often unusable in "confrontations" likely to occur during the next decade, you will really "do something" to stop Communism. Well, we want to stop Communism as much as the next fellow, maybe a little more. But of what use will all the military junk that Reagan will order, and Kirkland support, be when it comes to a crisis tomorrow in Central America? Of just about as much good use as it was yesterday in Iran, where the vast quantities of equipment provided the Shah simply melted away? Wittier and better educated than George Meany, Kirkland seems even more a "hard-liner." That the currently fashionable "hard-lining" will either help us out of increasingly desperate economic straits or will (especially when linked with Reagan's fondness for right-wing despots) further an effective foreign policy—can one really believe this?

THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN some positive developments in Kirkland's administration. A woman, Joyce Miller of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, has been appointed to the AFL-CIO Executive Board. Another woman now heads the education department. This shift, as the activist Ruth Jordan points out, was noticeable even in Meany's time. It came when labor belatedly endorsed the ERA. All signs point toward continuation of this trend.

Not only are there about 43 million women in the labor force, but more and more of them are working full time. And their number is growing at a phenomenal rate. Unquestionably, many of them want to work, and just as surely many employers want them on board—as long as they are paid less than men for the equal work they do. After all, managers know as well as anyone that women's portion of the dollar for equal work has diminished since the feminist push began. If militants no longer cry "Equal pay for equal work," it is, in Ruth Jordan's opinion, because management has manipulated that demand to produce less pay for both sexes. The new demand is "equal pay for comparable value," applied not only to women but to all workers. Well, it's hard to know

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how much difference this shift of language will make. "Equal pay" seems nice and simple, while "comparable value" sounds like something with which analytic philosophers can play.

But terminology, especially in job classification, does make a difference. And one thing is certain: there will be more working women with each passing day. How many more will be union members is the big question. Women now constitute the largest new group of unorganized workers in America. One hears no more talk within the labor movement of "dual unionism" as a peculiar sin either of the Black Caucus or of those women who have begun to clamor for a place in labor's decision-making process. Opposition no longer comes from within the ranks of the AFL-CIO to the interracial Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), which has so far enrolled 8,000 members.

The most recent statistics, those for 1978, indicate that 56 percent of all white women and nearly 75 percent of all black and Hispanic women are in the workforce. CLUW, which trains women to organize other women, is an exciting departure. Contrary to management expectations, women should not be much more difficult to organize than most men—which is to say, no more than enormously difficult.

Black men are not most men. Managers view them as a greater menace than white men or women of any color chiefly because they are said to be more organizable. The AFL-CIO organizing director Alan Kistler has testified before a House labor subcommittee about the not atypical advice of one business consultant addressing a seminar of executives at Wake Forest University:

> You have to follow the equal opportunity laws and have whatever percentage of blacks you are supposed to have. . . . But don't be heroes about the goddamned thing. Don't fill up the workforce with blacks. If you can keep them at a minimum, you are better off.

What has happened lately looks like a revolution. For the first time in U.S. history blacks are more likely to be represented by unions than whites. That 33 percent of all black wage and salary workers, including those on farms, are in unions, as recently reported by the Labor Department, is a truly impressive figure.

Furthermore, blacks and "other minorities" constitute around 40 percent of the Laborers' union, 37 percent of the Service Employees' union, 30 percent of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and a similar percentage of the Food and Commercial Workers, even 18 percent of the UAW. For this revolution, much credit must go to the A. Philip Randolph Institute, a 15-year-old organization, mostly funded by the AFL-CIO, which has devoted itself to the greater involvement of blacks in unions. The single-mindedness of Bayard Rustin and Norman Hill in their dedication to this goal has paid off. And there will be more of the same.

That's the good news. Part of the bad news is set forth by Warren Brown, a *Washington Post* staff writer who reminds us that black union members are concentrated in "so-called 'second-tier' jobs in the service and garment industries and in nonprofessional positions in the public sector, where pay usually is lower than that received by union members in 'first tier' industrial and skilled trade jobs." Moreover, the income gap between mainly white "first tier" unions (petroleum, steel, transportation equipment) and such heavily black or otherwise ethnic unions as the Laborers is increasing.

Sol Chaikin is so agitated by this gap, which is to him a generally unnoticed "agony within organized labor's own family," that he fears it could become "a class struggle within a class struggle." In an article he wrote not long ago Chaikin cited a 1979 Labor Department study showing that women nationwide account for more than 80 percent and minorities for 50 percent of all persons holding "second-tier" positions in *organized* industries. And it is Chaikin's sense that while some minority union members "may be lucky enough to break through into the high-wage promised land of the first tier . . . for the vast majority . . . the choice is either to make a tough living in the second tier or to make nothing at all." First-tier union members receive a total compensation package—wages and benefits—of nearly $15 per hour. Second-tier members, like those in the garment industry, average 50 to 60 percent less. Kenneth Young, Kirkland's executive assistant, and a lot of other establishment people think Chaikin is an alarmist. Young says, "There is a growing respect among the blacks and whites for one another, a respect for workers as workers," But there must have been a wistful note in his voice when he added, "That's the way it ought to be."

Indeed so. But what's actually in the cards? William E. Pollard, director of the AFL-CIO's civil rights department, sees more momentum for the positive trend "if racial discrimination continues to decline in the general workforce." Then he shifts the blame for a possible reversal where about half of it belongs: "After all, a lot of what is happening with blacks in unions reflects the hiring

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policies of management." But at least some of this also reflects the policies of the upper-tier unions. Chaikin appears to be in touch with this reality when he warns that the income gap will not be closed if "current economic and political pressures convince the higher-paid unions that their interests are better served by looking after themselves."

THESE ARE BAD TIMES for those "labor aristocrats" who have enjoyed more affluence than any other segment of the working class. Will they now reduce their rage at the lumpenproletariat, which because "it was pampered at their expense" prompted so many of them to vote for Ronald Reagan? The blue-collar vote can be divided into tiers, and the tiers into races. Quite simply, 85 to 90 percent of the black workers, even though they had been most hurt by Jimmy Carter's austerity, voted for him because they could not swallow Reagan, while a significant majority of white workers, also disgusted with a Democratic president who did little for them, found it quite possible to support his Republican opponent. Leadership, notably, in the UAW, that brought its white members around to more liberal candidates in an earlier election when they were infatuated with George Wallace, did far less well in its effort last year to scare them off Reagan. Not that they loved the grade-B actor so much. It's just that "he had unemployment going for him." So says Sam Meyers, the leader of UAW local 259. Wallace, the racist and self-styled populist, truly appealed to white auto and steel workers: "With unemployment *he* would have swept them all."

For a growing number of the best paid workers, without massive and systematic retraining, there can only be more unemployment. Ford's World Car is merely assembled in this country; all its major components are imported. Raise the import quota and "Buy American"? Even then, assuming we could afford the homemade product, it would increasingly be manufactured by computers and robots, with less and less human input.

Sam Meyers would like a new Reuther Plan, this time geared to manufacturers, say, trains, instead of cars, Good idea—especially if those trains also will not be turned out by robots and computers. And there are no Reuthers around with job-saving plans. Not even Douglas Fraser, the last of his wonderful generation, seems able to escape sufficiently from today's crisis in order to think about the problems piling up for tomorrow. The new UAW officials will inherit a union that even now has fewer auto workers than non-auto workers, just as the steel union has fewer steel workers than non-steel workers. If it avoids "adversary relations," can organized labor be expected to fight for jobs (different but real jobs) in heavy industry? Or will it, out of common decency, "cut a deal" such that workers who are still on the payroll get good benefits for their old age while the jobs they had disappear by attrition?

Why technological unemployment, a perennial problem, should be far more ominous in an era paradoxically called postindustrial demands close study and deep analysis. Neither the unions nor the labor intellectuals who cluster around them have given enough thought to such questions. What will happen on the day after tomorrow when service occupations start to be automated, at least in part? Unless ideas are generated and debated, the next major transformation will probably do little more than change us at some gut level into ideological Luddites.

THOUGHT, SAID SOMEONE, always lags behind reality, and the kinds of people who write for and read this magazine can't claim that they have ready-made answers to all these new problems. But what seems urgently needed is that the union leadership, both at the top and medium levels, recognize that their post-FDR and postwar happy days are over; that the time when coasting was enough for scoring victories is gone; that not only are new and fearful problems besetting the labor movement, but that a powerful array of enemies is out to bust it open—and all that talk about "cooperation" and "amity" isn't going to help. It is time to think today in order to fight tomorrow.

Meanwhile, organized labor will have all it can do just to hold its own. Business is after "a union-free environment." On this, Jules Bernstein, a labor lawyer, is the man who knows most. See, for instance, his exemplary article, "Union-Busting: From Benign Neglect to Malignant Growth" (*U.C. Davis Law Review*, Summer 1980). Or talk to him about the 1,500 consultants employed by more than a thousand firms that peddle union-busting tips. (Their average annual earnings are well over a half-billion dollars.) The handsomely rewarded experts are lawyers, industrial psychologists, and other white-collar bandits. While labor spies and old-fashioned thugs are still around, the overwhelming tendency is indeed to move from "brass knuckles to briefcases." Using every trick in the bag, including the polygraph (with such "job-related" questions as the applicant's sex life), these people busy themselves keeping potentially

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pro-union people out of work. But their highest art is to implement decertification and deauthorization. They chip away, shrink and weaken a movement that, short of the organizational and political "creativity" Bernstein calls for, is in mortal danger. He concludes: "The employers' dream may be an American nightmare."

Those who care about the most progressive force in this country—which, for all its flaws, the trade union movement still is—can only applaud a program that would translate into this formula: "Organize the unorganized, and reorganize the organized." We like even better a modification suggested by John Herling, the grand old socialist watchdog of the labor movement: "No, don't organize or reorganize. *Unionize*." By which he means, "Educate the rank and file about trade unionism, its history, its opportunities, and its responsibilities." A tall order. But maybe it's the place to begin as the AFL-CIO celebrates one hundred years of existence.

□

Jim Sleeper

Ed Koch and the Spirit of the Times

Ed Koch is apt to conclude a boisterous community meeting with a warning. "Just remember," he chides disgruntled New Yorkers in that shrill, pedantic singsong of his, "if you don't like what I'm doing, you can vote me out! *I'll* get a better job, but *you'll* never get a better mayor."

The hecklers are outflanked; the mayor leaves the room in a blaze of glory. His critics may rage against the thralldom in which he holds the little people he's supposed to serve. The little people, frightened by a general deterioration the mayor successfully blames on others, would rather keep him and take some of his guff, knowing most of it's reserved for those who want "something for nothing."

And they know Koch doesn't only threaten and blame. Like a father who tyrannizes his family but curries favor with anyone able to help his brood, the mayor leaves his community confrontations to call on the Republican platform committee. Not so subtly, he disowns Elizabeth Holtzman, the errant daughter who offends outside authority; instead he embraces the presiding supervisor of Hempstead, the closest thing we have to Orange County, Calif. Father Knows Best; it's a tough world out there, and someday we'll thank him for disciplining us to cope with it. The morning after the Republican landslide, liberals panicky about the city's prospects discover that, no thanks to themselves, New York's drawbridge to Reaganland is down, the road to Washington still passable. Ed Koch is a survivalist, not a social visionary; that, too, is something struggling families can understand.

So we find ourselves wondering whether a "better" mayor with a different temperament and vision would only wind up dancing the same dance. New Yorkers know their city is hostage to financial constraints, economic priorities, and political trends all beyond Ed Koch's control. He could denounce the Republican nonsolutions; then the drawbridge to Reaganland would be up. He could default on loans rather than cut services; then, like Cleveland's Kucinich, he'd probably be replaced from above.

But his savvy takes us only so far. Survivalism without vision becomes gnarled, stunting—itself something to be escaped, even at great risk. Besides, no one seriously thinks of New York City as a family, particularly when its would-be patriarch is cultivating some New Yorkers at the expense of others and kicking errant rebels out the back door.

What Koch does represent, I think, are certain dominant middle-class currents that are reshaping the city. His own transition from the old Jewish neighborhood of Crotona Park East in the Bronx to the flip, professional hedonism of liberal Greenwich Village politics is part of a larger class mutation whose survival in Reagan's America he is trying to negotiate.

The problem in all this is that the new middle

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class Ed Koch represents—atomistic, nationally networked under the tutelage of large corporations and professional associations—seems to have detached itself almost completely from the poor and working masses in which the older middle class was firmly rooted.

In an expanding industrial economy where barriers to entry were low, the old middle-class socialization of the outer borough neighborhoods held up to working people the prospect of a fuller social life. New York's older middle class, together with the unions, created a culture of progressive institutions—public, collective, and universal—which linked individual mobility with social purpose.

The network of public transit, parks, schools, libraries, museums, and hospitals (New York still has 30 percent of the nation's mass transit ridership, 60 percent of its municipal hospitals, the only city university system) meant much more to its beneficiaries than a leg up the ladder of personal advancement. It meant a different sort of social interaction than one found elsewhere: a city of walkers and subway newspaper and paperback readers instead of drivers; of brassy, better-educated workers; of intellectual development possible without huge resources simply to cross the threshold of higher education.

What that social interaction provided—in the way a thousand scholarships to elite private schools could not—was an integration of proletarian strength with professional excellence and high cultural achievement. This proved to be a wellspring of American vitality, and many New Yorkers still harbor personal associations with it. One example of its flowering is the ILGWU housing in the West '20s—built by amassing real-estate capital on a nonspeculative basis for its members, who bring to their community rooms a felicity of social exchange and self-government learned in their early union days.

But there cannot be Socialism in One City. Ultimately that sort of life rests in a national commitment to a full-employment economy whose investments are directed to meeting basic human needs in health, education, housing, and transportation—something neither the classical free market nor the new corporate consolidation provides. In retrospect it seems that New York's earlier middle class took advantage of a unique set of historical circumstances; industrial concentration amidst growing American economic power; an unusual gathering of European socialist immigrants; the city's link to Washington through FDR and the New Deal. But the postwar consolidation and the increasing mobility of large corporations, in a national economy whose share of the world's wealth is decreasing, has left little room for municipal public-sector development.

A reorganized business world was unwilling or unable to pay the high taxes and wages our public vitality entails. Other regions of the country without our burdens or visions could make themselves more attractive. And the outmigration of capital was abetted by federal welfare and Medicaid reimbursement formulas favoring other regions; by highway and housing policies favoring suburbanization; by skewed direct federal expenditures (military facilities, supplies purchases, and other dollar and employment outlays), which have the strongest multiplier effect in a local economy. Here in New York, the downward spiral of capital outflow, unemployment, shrinkage of the tax base, service curtailment, dependency on curtailed services, and deepening social pathology has by now itself become a disincentive to investment.

The tragedy is that as the public sector has fallen behind in meeting basic needs, it has become as despised politically by hard-pressed taxpayers as it has been foreclosed economically by corporate decisions. The culture of progressive institutions has become a rout as people try to replace deteriorating parks, mass transit, and schools with private consumption of expensive alternatives. Walkers and subway newspaper readers become drivers; a new generation of middle-class New Yorkers is lost to the social bond of public schooling.

Among lower-income people who can't step up their private consumption, there follows a regression to ethnic enclaves that give dubious succor and balkanize the city into warring camps. The progressive culture hadn't exactly dissolved ethnic tensions, of course, but it could have evolved in that direction. Instead, the dream has become trapped in middle-class memory, where it dissipates in sentimental nostalgia inspiring no new constructive action.

TRADITIONALLY, the public sector has employed people on the threshold of middle-class assimilation. Few seriously believe that its decline heralds equivalent private-sector opportunities. The city hired blacks and hispanics more quickly than, say, the construction industry; yet it has lost 70,000 municipal workers since 1975. Unemployment, the welfare lock, and immigration law have plunged thousands of minority New Yorkers into a culture of silence and illegal activity, or into the defection from upward mobility observable in

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such groups as the Black Muslims. All this is vitality lost to the public culture of the city.

Naturally, the City's survival agenda includes trying to turn investment incentives and federal policies around. But on whose terms in the new political economy, and with what hope for the revitalization of the culture of progressive institutions? That is a question City Hall has answered by grasping at a dubious new development.

AS THE VOID LEFT by the public sector's decay has been filled by divisive and predatory activities, a very different sort of change is occuring in another tier of the city's economy. OPEC and the negative national balance of trade have brought huge foreign investment to New York and, with it, a boom in tourism and entertainment. It is this influx from "above"—coupled, ironically, with official rejection of poor immigrants—that is giving us a new reputation as a "world city."

The more established service industries—advertising, finance, insurance, big real estate, data-processing—are doing fine. They sustain a new middle class that *can* step up its private consumption, with some preferential tax help from all levels of government. Against a picture of decay, the rise of this new middle class seems a godsend.

But measured against the need for full employment to meet basic human wants, the new industries and their class are parasitical and nonproductive. They involve the manipulation of words and symbols that go with the continuing consolidation of the nation's investment decisions by a few thousand big corporations. They do provide some blue-collar jobs, but on the whole the skill barriers to entry are high.

Nor is it clear that the boom "trickles down" to the older New York. Unlike the earlier middle class, which helped build the culture of progressive institutions, the new tier seems remarkably self-contained. Most of the revenue that does find its way from it into public coffers goes right back into services and amenities for the new class, which requires protection and hothouse nurture because it's skittish and highly mobile. Certainly many of its members are mortgage-poor, and harried by the high costs of making the city "liveable" through private transit, schools, and recreation. No one accuses $50,000-a-year professionals of accumulating wealth. Yet they are much better off than most New Yorkers, and much of what they spend benefits others little and leaves even less generosity for building public institutions.

We witness the consolidation not only of investment decisions but also of a style lubricated by expense account and tax-break mechanisms that rob the public sector of vitality. It is a hedonistic style, corrosive of familial or neighborhood obligation. In catering to it, the city sheds the proletarian imagery of production for the lithe imagery of consumption: the old docks and diners become playgrounds and cafés. In the absence of any larger social purpose, frank decadence is purveyed—a big business in New York whose next venture will probably be casino gambling.

Luxury conversions of lofts and tenements administer the coup de grâce to blue-collar jobs and lower-income communities in Manhattan. The city refuses to use scarce housing subsidies to keep life-long residents in neighborhoods that the new upscale market can convert; yet the city also refuses to recoup the millions of dollars in tax abatement and exemptions it gives to accelerate the conversions, tax dollars that could help the homeless. Since the construction of Lincoln Center began, for example, 20,000 people have been displaced from the West Side. Citywide, 6,000 people now live in the subways.

So begins an apartheid that presidential commissions have been warning about for a decade: enclaves of affluence amidst seas of despair, an isolation of classes completed by segregated transit (cabs, express buses) and schools, which permits upper-income people to ignore or even justify the suffering, the grinding down of those who seem, in their destitution, to be members of a different species. It is a bitter end to the culture of progressive institutions.

THE MAYOR GREETS the new class in his jogging shoes, Fantasy Island's genial director. As Jack Newfield put it, Ed Koch comforts the comfortable and afflicts the afflicted.

While the mayor's approach to municipal union needs, hospital reorganization, and tenant/real-estate issues has been insensitive, his dismantling of the public arena has not been wholly irrational. He has instituted a credible accounting system and new productivity measures to stretch rather than discontinue services. He has hired good administrators in areas where he is weakest—Human Resources Commissioner Stanley Brezenoff, for example, who is restoring the welfare caseload system although his boss rants about ineligibles.

Koch's arrogance toward lesser elected officials is not without its good side; his media popularity has enabled him to transcend at least some of the old machine politics, though he's far from pure on

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that score. But his arrogance extends toward the many effective community organizations that have arisen to fill the void left by the discredited clubhouse set.

Here he begins to work against the city's best interests. Even if one were resigned to the mayor's upward recycling of the commonweal to the new class, one would expect him to support the growing network of community organizations that carry forward much of the vitality of the old progressive culture on far fewer dollars than the municipal bureaucracy required. But Ed Koch has let the stigma of his antipoverty busts linger over all neighborhood groups because, like the new class he represents, he consistently underestimates the abilities of people who don't share his experience.

Under his nose, tenant management programs in buildings that were foreclosed by the city after owner abandonment are bringing over 30,000 apartments through rehabilitation toward the sale to nonprofit tenant cooperatives, returning them to the tax rolls. Potentially, this means a whole new sector of housing free of the vagaries of rent-control battles, real-estate speculation, arson, and abandonment. Other community housing organizations, like Los Sures in Williamsburg or the Manhattan Valley Development Corporation, now stand to reap tax-shelter proceeds from their recycling of abandoned buildings for low- and moderate-income tenants. They will apply this income to yet more rehabilitation.

In such groups as Greenpoint's People's Firehouse and Park Slope's Fifth Avenue Committee, these efforts are combined with sophisticated arson research and prevention, with community organizing and commercial revitalization, using federal and foundation assistance. In Bedford-Stuyvesant, neighborhood savings that would have left the community as profits to supermarket chains and savings banks are being captured by local credit unions and collective enterprises (home-care contracts, wholesale food co-ops), reinvested in creating more jobs and building a beautiful nursing home.

The city oversees some of these programs, but they were invented by community people, now networked citywide through such groups as the Association of Neighborhood Housing Developers, which publishes the invaluable bimonthly *City Limits*. Some of their proposals have even been praised by the Heritage Foundation of Reagan think-tank fame; indeed, Brooklyn's Pratt Center for Community Development has assembled a top-level working group to explore how the Reagan administration's sympathy for self-help and local discretion in spending federal aid can benefit these efforts. A mayor more trusting of people's determination to save their own neighborhoods and less enamored of big developers might actually help these groups to survive the swing of Reagan's axe.

Koch is certainly astute enough to cast almost anything in terms Washington can understand. But to do that on behalf of the best efforts in the city, he first has to recognize the potential significance of those efforts; and to do *that*, he needs to add a little social vision to his instinctive survivalism. New York doesn't have to become the Paris Commune in order to be a seedbed of economic change. Just as lower-income people are most vulnerable to even modest cuts, they're capable of being enormously cheered, mobilized, and trained with relatively modest outside aid, provided they're given the chance to deploy it wisely. The past two decades have spawned a new breed of community activists who know how. Koch should be proclaiming this truth and recruiting every possible source of capital and talent from around the country to help them.

I think it's precisely because he places so little faith in this kind of work that he's defensive in his

Subscription, Anyone?

MOSCOW, Dec. 24, '81 (UPI)—Some Russians have found a perfect New Year's gift for a friend: a toilet paper subscription.

All kinds of paper are in short supply in the Soviet capital and elsewhere throughout the country. The plan is intended to alleviate long lines by having shoppers buy something like "toilet paper futures."

Russians who tried to explain the new marketing concept to a Western friend said it worked something like a magazine subscription.

"You go to the store and fill out a form—a postcard, actually," one said. "This postcard will be mailed back to you whenever the store gets a fresh supply of toilet paper, and only those with postcards will be allowed to buy it."

"I haven't seen it in our store yet," a Muscovite said. "But my mother has enrolled for a subscription, and she thinks it's wonderful. She called me all excited and said: 'I hope for the day that you, too, can buy toilet paper this way.'" □

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relations with groups trying to capture local cash flows and outside subsidies for new forms of real-estate management and collective enterprise. In this he reflects the tragic mutation in middle-class aspirations that has led so many New Yorkers to reject their past, instead of understanding that their own interests and peace of mind are linked to the economic well-being and cultural strength of those farther down the social scale.

No one pretends that well-being and strength can grow without major shifts of capital back this way. But that won't happen overnight, and it shouldn't have to happen on terms alien to working New Yorkers with new ideas of their own.

In the meantime, there are over $12 billion in municipal pension funds, which could be invested in neighborhood and small business development (and fully guaranteed), if the mayor would only take the lead. When Ed Koch begins to realize what people who are properly organized can accomplish, and when he takes up their cause, curbing gross inequities to give them all the help he can—*he'll* be doing a better job, and we'll have a better mayor. □

Art Buchwald

Executions & Torture — But in Moderation

The Reagan administration has a new approach to human rights which, while it won't affect anyone in the U.S., may have some important ramifications for political prisoners around the world.

The philosophy of the new approach was expressed recently by Prof. Jeane Kirkpatrick of Georgetown University, who is a very influential Reagan adviser.

"If we are confronted with the choice between offering assistance to a moderately repressive autocratic government, which is also friendly to the United States, and permitting it to be overrun by a Cuban-trained, Cuban-armed, Cuban-sponsored insurgency, we would assist the moderate autocracy," Miss Kirkpatrick was quoted as saying.

Nobody in his or her right mind would argue with that.

The big question is, how far a moderately repressive autocratic government can go to keep the opposition down?

New human rights guidelines will have to be written for the MRAG countries.

Right now the ambassadors of Moderately Repressive Autocratic Governments are being called home for Christmas to advise their juntas on what the new American government will expect of them in the human rights field.

"Colonels, I am happy to report that we can expect all the support we need from the United States to put down the political opposition, providing we can prove our repressive government is being threatened by Cuban intervention."

"Suppose we can't prove it?"

"They'll take our word for it, if we can produce confessions from our political opponents."

"Does that mean we can still resort to torture to exact the confessions?"

"In moderation. Obviously, a certain amount of torture has to be used but we can't overdo it."

"What about dunking them in water until they almost drown?"

"If it's done with compassion. But I think we better stay away from pulling out fingernails, at least at the beginning of the Reagan term."

"Can we continue summary executions without trials?"

"Nobody in the Reagan transition team has spoken out against them. From all I can gather, the U.S. will no longer interfere in our justice system."

"Thank God. Does that mean we can still throw writers, editors and students into prison without having our military aid cut off?"

"I believe that the U.S. would encourage it as long as we can prove they are a threat to the regime."

"Will the secret police be able to get the latest equipment to put down terrorism in our country?"

"That goes without saying. If the United States wants to keep us as a friend, they're going to give us the tools to keep another regime from taking over."

"They're finally making some sense in Washington. As I see it, as long as we torture our opponents in moderation and repress our people for their own good, and only shoot the people who deserve it, we can have good relations with the United States again."

"Colonels, I don't know about the rest of you, but as head of the Moderate Repressive Junta I recommend we give human rights a try."

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Facts We Dare Not Forget

Excerpts from a Neglected Government Report on Poverty & Unemployment to Which the New Administration Will Surely Pay No Attention

In June 1980 the National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity, under the chairmanship of Arthur I. Blaustein, submitted its Twelfth Report, CRITICAL CHOICES FOR THE EIGHTIES, *to President Carter (available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402).*

We have culled a few pages that concern poverty and unemployment from the 174-pp. Report (deleting all but two of the footnoes that cite the literature). Most likely, the Carter administration would not have made significant use of the facts and recommendations in the Report. It is virtually certain that the new Reagan administration will ignore them. Yet there is material here that may move a few members of Congress to propose remedial legislation.

The Report opens with a discussion of "Poverty in America: Myths and Realities." It describes the myths and gets to the realities. — EDS.

I. Poverty: The Realities

The evidence shows that poverty is not only still with us, but that it is also increasingly immune to the remedies of the past. And although some groups have fared relatively well under the antipoverty strategies of the past decade and a half, others have not. More specifically, a fair and realistic interpretation of the facts would show that —

- Poverty has been minimally reduced since the late 1960s; the improvement that has occurred in the past decade has resulted almost entirely from the expansion of "income transfer" and federal antipoverty programs. The kind of economic growth promoted in the past ten years has only slightly improved the chances of the poor for decent, permanent jobs and adequate earnings.
- The pattern of growth has created a vast population of the economically marginal and welfare-dependent. Many have been lifted above the official poverty threshold by social insurance and welfare transfers, but many have not. Of those who have, many, even using the most generous definitions, have not been raised to what the U.S. Department of Labor defines as a "lower living standard."
- Although the poverty count has dropped in the past decade and a half, the poverty population is less equally distributed than in the mid-1960s. Measured by their relative chances of being poor, the most traditionally disadvantaged groups in American society—minorities and women—are worse off than a decade ago. If one main objective of the War on Poverty has been to achieve racial and sexual equality of opportunity, we are losing—and losing badly. . . .

Patterns of Poverty

STAGNATION AND UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT. Let us consider first some of the broad contours of poverty in the United States over the past two decades. Measured by the official Census data, two facts stand out with respect to the reduction of poverty since the start of the 1960s. They are that it had ground almost to a halt by the end of that decade, and even at its height it was mainly confined to certain regions and not to others.

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In 1959, a little over 22 percent of the American population was poor; by 1969, only 12 percent. But the next several years brought virtually no change in overall poverty rates. They rose during the recession of 1975 over the 1969 level and, in the "recovery" since then, have arrived at a level only about one-half of a percentage point below it.[1]

But that general trend masks a pattern that is less often recognized. Most of the reduction in poverty, even during the economic expansion of the 1960s, occurred in the South and, to an even greater degree, generally in rural areas. In the North and West, and especially in the cities, poverty has proven more resistant from the start.

Of the approximately 14 million fewer poor in 1977 than in 1959, 9 million were Southern. The *number* of poor people in the North and West in 1977 was virtually the same as a decade earlier. Even more striking, the *rate* of poverty in the North and West has *risen* since 1969, while the Southern rate has continued to fall.

The decline in poverty among Southern blacks highlights this difference even more strongly. At the end of the late 1950s, over two-thirds of the black population in the South was poor; by 1977, only one-third. But the rate of poverty among Northern blacks, after nearly two decades of economic growth and civil rights legislation, has declined only marginally in 20 years. There are nearly a million more black poor in the Northern and Western states today than in 1959.

In part, the persistence of poverty among Northern blacks reflects the massive migration of poor blacks out of the South during the whole post-World War II period. But it also indicates the resistance of the kind of poverty suffered by Northern blacks to anti-poverty strategies and economic growth. Much of the same picture emerges, too, for the Hispanic poor. Poverty among Americans of Spanish origin rose sharply in the 1970s in New England and the Midwest (and almost as much in the Pacific region), while it declined in the Southern and Mountain states.

The resistance of Northern poverty is closely bound up with the greater intractability of *urban* poverty in general. Just as the "successes" in the War on Poverty have been mostly in the South, so too have they been mainly rural. Of those 14 million fewer poor since 1959, nearly 12 million were accounted for by nonmetropolitan areas. Central-city poverty, on the other hand, has declined only slightly since 1959, and has *risen* during the 1970s. For both races, but especially for blacks, central-city rates of family poverty were higher in 1977 than a decade earlier.

The stagnation in national poverty rates and the increasing concentration of the poor in the central cities of the North and West suggest that the development of the American economy in the recent past has had a highly uneven impact on the poor. This becomes clearer when we look specifically at the shifting role of economic growth in reducing poverty. . . .

THE GROWTH OF INEQUALITY. Beneath the myth of the "abolition of poverty, then, is the reality of continuing hardship for the aged and a shocking increase in poverty among youth—especially the children of the inner cities. But progress against poverty has differed not only according to age, but to sex and race as well.

To the extent that there have been "winners" in the War on Poverty during the 70s, they have been male—and mainly white. What one writer has called the "feminization of poverty" has become one of the most compelling social facts of the decade. And at the same time, relatedly, the chances of poverty have also increased for blacks, relative to whites.

The shift in the poor population, away

[1] In 1977, the poverty rate for persons of all races was 11.6 percent. Black poverty—officially 31.3 percent in 1977—was less than a percentage point lower than in 1969. Equivalent data on poverty among Americans of Spanish origin has been collected only since 1972, but the overall pattern is clearly the same. The rate of poverty among Hispanics (22.4 percent in 1977) was less than half a percentage point below the level of five years earlier. *Current Population Reports: Characteristics of the Population Below the Poverty Level*, Current Population Reports: Consumer Income, series P. 60, no. 119 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1977).

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from earners and toward families in which no one works in the paid labor force, corresponds to the increasing proportion of women (and children in households headed by women) among the poor. In 1976, they passed men (and children in male-headed families) in absolute numbers—there are now more poor in female- than in male-headed households, for the first time since the data have been gathered. Almost one female-headed family in three is poor; about one in 18 families headed by a man is poor. The decline in poverty during the past decade has been almost entirely in families headed by men. In 1978, there were about 1.2 million fewer poor children in families headed by men than a decade earlier. But there were about a million and a half *more* poor children in families headed by women.

The main source of this startling shift has been the rising frequency of marital disruption, coupled with continuing poor opportunities for decent earnings, and inadequate benefits and supportive services for single women with children. In 1978, one in five families in the U.S. was headed by a single parent, versus one in nine in 1970. Most of those single parents are women, and their risks of poverty are almost three times those of single fathers who head families—whose poverty rate, in turn, is more than twice that of married family heads with children.

As in the case of the aged, the broad statistics mask two key facts about the state of single mothers: even those who are not poor by the official measure are often not far from poverty, and those who also face the burdens of youth and/or minority status are much worse off than others. The *median* income in 1977 of single-mother families was only $340 above the poverty level for a nonfarm family of four; among black and Hispanic single mothers, about $1000 *below* it.[2]

The crippling poverty of single mothers reflects their exclusion from steady work and the rock-bottom earnings received when working regularly. The majority of female family heads with children work in the paid labor force at some point during the year, and they fare much better than those who are entirely dependent on income transfers for a living. An astonishing nine out of ten single mothers with children under six who did not work in the paid labor force during 1977 were below the poverty line—another comment on the limits of our supposedly "overgenerous" welfare system. But women's earnings are often so low that even full-time work is no security against poverty: more than a *third* of single mothers with children under six who worked *full time* at paid labor at some point in 1977 were poor.

The much more rapid decline in poverty for men has meant that the inequality in life-chances between men and women has grown considerably over the past few years. At the end of the '60s, women faced a much greater risk of poverty than men; the economic and social policies of the '70s have made that disparity even greater. Thus, in 1967, a woman heading a family was about 3.8 times more likely to be poor than a man heading one. By 1977, after more than a decade of antidiscrimination efforts, she was 5.7 times more likely to be poor. If anything, the evidence suggests that this trend will continue to worsen. One reason is that the income gap between the sexes is widest by far among the young. In 1977, the official poverty rate among female family heads under 24 years of age was almost 66 percent, more distant from the rate for their male counterparts than in the late '60s. A young woman heading a family in 1967 was about five times more likely than a young man to be poor; by 1977, nine times. It is among the rising generation of young women, then, that the poverty of the of the 1970s has been most devastating, and the outlook for the 1980s is most bleak.

The deepening inequality between men and women is compounded, predictably, when joined with the division between minority and white: the poverty population is becoming more minority as it becomes more

[2] Seven out of ten families with children headed by a woman under 25 were poor in 1977—three out of four if she was black and four out of five if she had related children under 6. Data from Elizabeth Waldman *et al.*, "Working Mothers in the 1970's: A Look at the Statistics," *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1979, pp. 45, 46.

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female. The pace of change is not as fast, but it is significant. In 1967, the rate of poverty among black family heads was roughly 3.75 times that of whites. By 1977 it had reached four times the white rate.

That increase may seem fairly small, but its significance becomes clear when we consider that it is only a relatively sharp drop in poverty among families headed by black men that has kept black poverty rates from leaping still faster ahead of the rates for whites. For the situation of black women has deteriorated sharply in the past decade. This is particularly apparent if we compare their poverty rates with those of white men. In 1967, a black woman heading a family had 7½ times the chance of being poor as a white man; by 1977, she had 10½ times the chance.

The growth of the welfare state since the late '60s, therefore, has had a critical impact on the shape of poverty in America. But that impact has had less to do with reducing the size of the poverty population than with shifting the sex (and, to a lesser degree, the color) of the people within it. All other things being equal, if the proportion of the poor who are in female-headed families were to increase at the same rate as it did from 1967 to 1977, the poverty population would be composed solely of women and their children by about the year 2000. . . .

II. Unemployment and Deprivation

Following a section on the Energy Crisis, and before it gets to such matters as community services, economic opportunity, Ceta, welfare programs and reforms, the Report speaks of unemployment and its effects:

The case for the relative painlessness of modern unemployment rests on the assumption that, because of the expansion of government benefits, unemployment no longer results in significant economic deprivation. But that assumption ignores the noneconomic losses that come with losing a job—the effect on the worker's self-esteem, hopes for the future, and relations with others. In addition, by ignoring the limits on the scope and generosity of benefits available to the unemployed, the assumption greatly minimizes the very real economic deprivation many of them still face.

In September 1979 the average weekly unemployment benefit was $89.10. That was about $27 a week less than what full-time work at the minimum wage would have earned and almost $40 a week below the federal poverty line for a nonfarm family of four. In some states, moreover, average weekly benefits are considerably lower.

More important, fewer than half of unemployed individuals collect unemployment benefits. Benefits are generally not available to people who leave their jobs, and not at all to those seeking to enter the work force or to workers in industries not covered by state or federal programs.

In a special survey in 1976 the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) discovered that only 36 percent of their sample of the unemployed had income from unemployment insurance in the previous month. Even fewer (13 percent) had received Food Stamps, and fewer still (12 percent) had received public assistance. Five percent of the sample reported no income sources at all. The median family income for these workers was $450 a month; 14 percent reported a monthly *total* income from all sources of less than $200.

Recent studies based on a national sample of families show how serious the income losses from unemployment can still be. One study calculates that male family heads in the prime range (35-64) who were unemployed at some point during 1976 lost an average of over $4,000.00 in earnings. Even when unemployment benefits and foregone taxes were included, these men lost, on the average, about a fourth of their accustomed disposable income. This proportion, the study finds, has increased significantly since the late 1960s, mainly because of the longer average duration of joblessness in the recessionary mid-70s. Another study calculated that 40 percent of families with an unemployed main earner in the 1975 recession suffered "serious" eco-

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nomic hardship; 25 percent suffered a loss of 30 percent or more of their income.

These figures, moreover, mask the fact that many families manage to cushion income loss only by various coping strategies, from cutting into savings to putting more family members to work.

Studies of the Depression painted a grim picture of families cutting back on food, dropping insurance policies, exhausting savings accounts, and living on what they could borrow from friends and relatives. Improved benefits have doubtless softened the severity of that pattern, but the overall pattern remains the same. The BLS 1976 survey found that seven out of ten of their sample of unemployed were meeting living costs by cutting back on spending for food, clothing, and transportation; more than one in ten had been forced to move to cheaper housing; and 27 percent had been forced to borrow money.

The loss of a job may start a vicious cycle, for it often makes it difficult to re-enter the work force. Many who lost a job in the "mini-recession" of the early 1970s began by cutting into savings, slicing normal expenses to the minimum, and deferring all nonessential spending. As the time of unemployment lengthened, they used more drastic expedients: selling off insurance policies, moving into cheaper homes or apartments, and ultimately selling cars and other belongings. Unfortunately, the loss of a car often compounds the problem because it interferes with the search for new work.

The array of government benefits actually or potentially available may make deprivation less severe than it was in the 1930s, but this can hardly be of much comfort to workers trying to subsist on benefits below the poverty level or forced to find cheaper housing. And, as the following sections demonstrate, continued economic deprivation is but one of many reasons why job loss remains a personally crippling experience. . . .

The Psychological Impact

THE LINK between job loss and psychological malaise—from general dissatisfaction to psychosis and suicide—is well established.

A striking effect of unemployment, consistently uncovered in studies since the Depression, is its crippling impact on self-respect. The impact is worse when the unemployed are forced to undergo a change in family status, that is, losing the role of breadwinner while another family member goes to work. It is worse, too, to the extent that work is defined as central to their view of themselves and their worth. A main source of the loss of self-respect is the tendency for the unemployed to blame themselves for their situation. Studies reveal that if they can "externalize"the cause of their unemployment, the loss of self-esteem is less: the higher local unemployment, for example, the less the negative impact of job loss on the respondents' self-esteem. The sense of worth is usually regained on becoming re-employed, but for those whose status in their family remains changed, the loss of self-respect is more enduring.

Another study showed that the emotional impact of job loss is hardest on those in low-level jobs. It is extremely difficult for professionals and others in high-status jobs to find jobs, but for people in more routine low-level work, emotional well-being is often wholly tied to being able to bring home a paycheck. This theme consistently recurs in the research on the impact of unemployment: the devastating emotional impact of joblessness strikes hardest at those with the fewest inner resources, the least ability to cope with it, and the least mobility.

Unemployment and Psychiatric Hospitals

UNEMPLOYMENT has a demonstrated effect on the incidence of depression, and studies show that unemployment is linked to more drastic psychological impairments as well. One way of measuring the extent of severe mental illness is through admission rates to psychiatric hospitals. As far back as 1935 a study of first admissions to state psychiatric facilities found that roughly two-thirds of state hospitals reported increased admissions in the first three years of the Depression. More recent studies, using far more sophisticated methods, support the early conclusions. The most

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comprehensive study covering the period of 1852 to 1967 was designed to measure the impact of short-term fluctuations in the economy. Throughout the period, the rate of psychiatric hospitalization was closely associated with changes in the level of employment in manufacturing industries.

A recent analysis prepared by the same researcher for the Joint Economic Committee of Congress examined mental-hospital admissions from the 1940s through the 1960s and calculated the precise increase that could be attributed to rising unemployment. It found that raising the official jobless rate by one percentage point could be expected to increase psychiatric admissions by 3.4 percent.

An increase in psychiatric admissions may reflect factors other than an actual increase in mental illness. During periods of economic stress normal family and community resources for dealing with the mentally ill may break down or weaken under the impact of general economic crisis, thus forcing more of the burden of care onto public institutions.

The Impact of Stress

EXPLANATIONS for the link between unemployment and mental health have focused on the concept of stress. Loss of a job is seen as one of many "life events" that can place enough extra stress on individuals to cause serious psychological damage.

Though the evidence is indirect, stress researchers have turned up consistent links between the severity of "life stresses" and the incidence of clinical depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia, as well as high scores on scales of general psychiatric symptoms.

One study compared people who had faced few stressful events but had many psychiatric symptoms with those who had experienced much stress but seemed relatively unimpaired. The key factor was the degree of "social integration"—including the connection of stable employment.

The same study points out that the steadily employed are able to buy the kinds of supports, including better mental health care and legal services, that can help them through a personal crisis. Similarly, a study of the origins of manic-depressive psychosis among working people finds it closely related to "role loss—defined as removal from the primary social positions and concomitant activities that one uses to organize one's place in the world." The loss of a job, if it cannot be replaced by another job or some alternative way of "organizing one's place in the world," can be the first link in a chain leading to psychosis.

Other studies have shown that unemployment is not only a source of psychological stress in itself, but also a cause of other stresses that tend to weaken the individual's ability to cope with stressful situations. For example, unemployment rates were strongly associated with many other stressful life-crises, such as having to move or becoming separated or divorced, all of which are correlated with higher rates of mental illness. The unemployed face not only the crisis itself, but also diminished finances to cope with it. Losing a job can set in motion a vicious cycle of other personal catastrophes that are much more difficult to handle for people who lack both the material and emotional resources that a decent, stable job provides. The impact on low-income families is most severe.

Women, Unemployment, and Mental Health

PART OF the myth of painless unemployment is the idea that unemployed women suffer little because their work is often not financially "necessary." Recent research shows that this is misleading. Women who are confined to unpaid labor in the home suffer considerably more symptoms of mental illness than women who are employed outside. For example, women in the paid labor force are less likely to show symptoms of depression, and among women who do show such symptoms, those who work outside the home tend to be less seriously impaired than those who do not. Similarly, the constricting and isolating demands of the unemployed-housewife role, according to a recent study, may help explain the frequent finding that married women tend to have higher rates of mental illness than married men. In samples of var-

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ious individuals, unemployed housewives showed the most symptoms of psychiatric disturbance and employed husbands the least. The measured amount of disturbance for employed housewives fell in between.

Suicide

IN ADDITION to the strong links between general psychological well-being and employment, powerful association between unemployment and suicide have also been found, that is, the suicide rate is closely correlated with the official unemployment rate. Research prepared for the Joint Economic Committee concluded that a rise in the unemployment rate of 1 percent would raise suicide rates by about 4 percent, and the 1.4 percentage point increase in the jobless rate in 1970 could be held responsible for roughly 1,500 suicides across the country. According to the research, the suicide rate has been so closely tied to change in unemployment over a period of time that it is one of the more reliable indicators of the economy in the United States.

Effects on Health

THERE IS clear and persuasive evidence that unemployment affects health, in both the short term and the long. The researcher for the Joint Economic Committee calculated that there are clear links between rises in the official unemployment rate and the rate of deaths from severe illnesses. A one-percentage point increase in the national unemployment rate raises deaths from cardiovascular and renal diseases and cirrhosis of the liver by roughly 2 percent. This suggests that the 1.4 percent rise in the unemployment rate in 1970 was responsible for over 25,000 deaths from cardiovascular and kidney disease over the next five years. The rise in death rates from liver disease is directly traceable to increased alcohol consumption under the impact of economic crisis. Its effects on the death rate appear mainly within two years of the onset of a decline in employment.

Researchers have linked the incidence of a high number of stressful events—including job loss—to increased risks of heart attack, chronic asthma, respiratory diseases, streptococcal infections, complications in pregnancy, and skin diseases.

Long-term studies reveal that the loss of a job—and even the threat of unemployment—can have a striking impact on the physical health of the unemployed or threatened person. But the effects of unemployment run even deeper, for they strike not only the jobless themselves but also, in one way or another, their children. The first and most drastic effect is increased infant mortality.

Infant Mortality

PROGRESS against infant mortality in the United States has stagnated since the 1950s. Compared to other advanced industrial societies, the rate of infant deaths has worsened during the past 25 years. One study suggests that the erratic performance of the postwar American economy may explain that decline: increased infant death rates have been associated with rises in unemployment rates since the 1920s. Deaths of infants less than a day old showed the most striking rise within a year of the economic downturn; deaths of older infants peaked three to five years later.

The study points out that fetal and early infant deaths are likely to be most affected by changes in the health of the mother following economic dislocation. Those changes are probably the result of drastic changes in nutrition, high levels of stress and hypertension, increased use of alcohol or sedatives, or increased smoking. Later infant deaths are more likely to stem from longer-acting environmental stresses directly affecting the child; lower income and decreased ability to provide or purchase adequate postnatal care lead to increased risk of accidents, infections, and other preventable causes of infant death.

Because they rely on the official unemployment rate, most studies may underestimate the effects of health on individuals without a job and their families. A study of the effects of job loss on "urban social distress" in 51 American cities used two distinct indices. One, the "exclusion index," counted not only the officially unemployed but also those not in the labor force but wanting work, as well as people working involuntarily part-

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time and those working full-time but earning less than adequate incomes. The other, an index of "inadequacy" of employment, included the same categories of people, but only if they were household heads and thus, presumably, most affected by being out of work or in a poor job. Both of these measures proved to be more closely correlated with rates of infant mortality and deaths due to pregnancy complications than the official rate alone.

Unemployment and Crime

RESEARCHERS ON the effects of unemployment on crime have increasingly found "general, if not uniform" support for a close connection between high levels of joblessness and rising crime rates. The connection applies particularly to crimes against property, but usually to crimes of violence as well. In addition, the most rigorous studies tend to come up with the strongest links.

In 1975 the Federal Bureau of Prisons reported that since the early 1950s the size of the federal prison population had been directly related to the national unemployment rate. Increases in the unemployment rate were followed, after about 15 months, by increased admissions to federal facilities. A one-percentage-point increase in the unemployment rate tended to increase state prison admissions by about 4 percent. Similar patterns were found in Canada, England and Wales, and Scotland. These findings are backed by studies linking employment and/or labor-force participation rates with reported crime rates across a variety of jurisdictions: cities, census tracts within cities, states, and the nation as a whole.

Further, a number of studies have found corresponding links between juvenile delinquency rates and reported rates of unemployment, and the homicide rate in 51 cities was significantly correlated with official unemployment rates.

The most recent studies comparing unemployment and crime rates in individual states have reaffirmed the close relationship between high levels of joblessness and rates of serious crimes. It has been calculated that if the unemployment rate in Michigan in 1975 (13.8 percent) had been reduced to 4 percent, an often-quoted level of "full employment," the rate of serious crimes in that state would have been reduced that year by 39 percent, or nearly 250,000.

A 1977 study of national crime and unemployment rates estimates that a one-percentage-point increase in unemployment in 1970 accounted for 3.8 percent of all homicides, 5.7 percent of robberies, 2.8 percent of larcenies, and 8.7 percent of narcotics arrests in that year.

The study points out that the high correlation between unemployment and narcotics violations demonstrates how unemployment has a "compound interest" effect on crime rates. Unemployment leads to increased use of addicting drugs; the drug use, in turn, leads to much higher rates of property crime stemming from the high cost of maintaining the drug habit. Much the same "compounding" effect takes place with alcohol: its consumption rises dramatically during economic crises, and the use of alcohol is, in turn, closely associated with serious crime—in this case, particularly with violent crime.

There are indications that high unemployment also contributes to increased crime by making it more difficult for ex-offenders or ex-addicts to re-enter the work force.

Effects on Family Life

RECENT RESEARCH confirms that "economic uncertainty brought on by unemployment and marginal employment is a principal reason why family relations deteriorate." As usual, this effect strikes hardest at those groups least able to cope, materially or emotionally, with the strains of job loss. Thus, one study finds that serious marital dissatisfaction following the job loss of a breadwinner is much more common among the "economically marginal"—those with perennially low income and unstable jobs. Unemployment also strikes most heavily at younger families, those with preschool children, disrupting family life at a time when stability is needed most. The impact is especially severe, too, for women who head families. They are much

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less likely to be able to cushion the blow by having other family members work, and collect unemployment benefits much less often. Only about a fourth of [unemployed] women heading families during the 1975 recession, one study shows, collected benefits.

Unemployment can also prevent families from developing. The absence of decent prospects for steady work can lead men to avoid the responsibilities of marriage and women to reject it. There are also a number of indications that putting off marriage because of poor job prospects or unemployment contributes to the high rates of illegitimate births among the poor.

Again, a key finding was that the factors often cited as mitigating the "new unemployment" made little or no difference in mitigating the impact of unemployment on family life, and family problems clearly increased as the length of time off the job grew.

Child Abuse

ONE of the most compelling indicators of family tension is child abuse, and studies consistently show that reported child abuse is much more prevalent among the unemployed and marginally employed. A study of stress levels and child abuse showed that, compared with a control group of nonabusers, the child abusers had more often faced what the research called a major "life crisis"—a series of stressful events coming one on top of the other. The researchers suggest that the precipitating role of unemployment in this series of events is crucial; in particular, geographic mobility and "the frequency with which families must be uprooted in order to find new employment" often lead to multiple crises in the lives of the child abusers.

The Role of Social Supports

UNEMPLOYMENT represents the loss of one of the most important social ties—the connection to the workplace—that can help cushion the impact of personal crises. The effect is intensified if job loss and searching for new work necessitate a change in residence or a break in ties with friends, relatives, and the community. Even if the loss of a job does not force relocation, it involves the diminishing of social ties with friends and former associates: the unemployed may fear rejection, want to hide their lowered status, or feel too humiliated by their loss of income and opportunities to maintain their personal relations with others.

Unemployment and the compounded impact of joblessness on an individual's personal life serve to isolate the victims from the social ties and family support that they need most. It sets in motion a cycle of deprivation and multiple crises. Social supports—family and community—are essential to moderating that process. . . . □

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Murray Hausknecht

Informers and Other Villains

A Discussion of Victor Navasky's Book *Naming Names*

Nations annually celebrate historic victories over past injustices and remember other historic events they do not celebrate. These are the recurrent nightmares that follow victories over tyranny and unjust social orders; those periods in which freedom must be defended but when it is not clear who is friend and who is foe, or, indeed, whether they are separable into such neat categories. Artists, scholars, and journalists continually return to these events and we read about them because we sense that the nightmares have something significant to tell us about our political institutions and lives.

They arose early in our history and have reappeared in various guises; the last great convulsion occurred after World II and was marked by the investigations of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) and Joe McCarthy. These irruptions are obviously related to the strains existing in the larger world—McCarthyism and HUAC are hardly understandable except by reference to the Cold War. But they have other sources. A democratic political order formally promotes, blesses, and protects the private and the idiosyncratic whether it is heretical thought or particularistic personal commitment. In everyday life the demands of the idiosyncratic and the particular conflict with the public morality of the majority, and the latter's superiority of numbers is frequently transformed into political power brought to bear in the conflict. The ever-present threat of such transmutations is one of the facts of our political life and helps account for the continuing interest in McCarthyism and HUAC hearings: to know how and why they happened is to be better prepared for the future.

Education is not the sole source of attraction. The inherently dramatic quality of the conflict between the opposing pulls of the public and the private, the conventional and the nonconforming, exercises its own fascination, and when these conflicts then are transformed into political struggles they often take shapes that blur the distinction between theater and reality, fiction and life. The struggles can easily be presented, therefore, in forms inspired by literature and drama, and so provide the same satisfactions as do works of fiction. But are the ends of political education adequately served when history is cast in these forms, or even when a particular literary genre merely serves as a metaphor governing the approach to the task at hand?

This question is particularly pertinent to the latest recounting of the HUAC investigations into "subversion" in Hollywood. In Victor Navasky's absorbing book *Naming Names* (Viking, 1980), the central focus is the behavior of "those otherwise decent individuals" who complied with HUAC's demand for the names of others whom they knew to be Communists, though to do so was a betrayal of persons and political morality. This entails, in Navasky's words, such questions as: "What are the conditions under which good men do things they know to be wrong? . . . What happens when a state puts pressure on its citizens to betray their fellows? . . . What, in other words, is to be learned from this episode in collaboration and betrayal American-style?" The aim, then, is education but the story is conceived as "less history than a moral detective story."

That genre of fiction involves a heavily plotted story with, typically, at least three fixed and easily distinguishable elements: an innocent victim, a detective hero, and a guilty criminal. The story consists of the discovery

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and piecing together of evidence so that it unequivocally proves the guilt of the accused. Unlike the usual novel, the conventional detective story depicts an unproblematic world in which the evil that sets the story in motion is dealt with in a way that leaves no residue of questions about guilt, innocence, or the nature of evil itself; it is, therefore, an attractive form of "escape" literature.

It is not surprising that Navasky, a lawyer by training, used the detective story as a frame of reference, since it is a form congruent with a legal orientation. Like detectives, lawyers, especially those acting as prosecutors, build a case so that attention remains focused solely on the accused. Indeed, many of the strengths and defects of *Naming Names* follow from the controlling metaphor.

The strengths of the book are many and ought not to be overlooked. For a considerable number of people HUAC and McCarthy are now part of "history"—the past entombed in textbooks—while others find events and names that once were part of the very stuff of their daily lives now rapidly receding from memory. Both groups can benefit from reading Navasky's description of the Committee's Hollywood adventure; it is solidly based on other histories of HUAC and its times as well as on archival sources. But the central attraction is the new information that emerges from Navasky's own interviews with over a hundred people who were caught up in the Committee's investigation and the eddies it generated. Navasky's subjects ranged from the witnesses who named names to such odd characters as Ernest Philip Cohen, the lay analyst of choice for many Hollywood Communists, who encouraged his patients to cooperate with the Committee. This material, under Navasky's intelligent probing of its significance, does much to deepen and extend our understanding of the social-psychological processes involved in such investigations as the Committee's.

Like many other detective stories, it is particularly good on a specific social milieu, in this case one Navasky calls "the informer subculture." It contained in addition to HUAC itself a variety of informers; entrepreneurs of Americanism who published such "lists" as *Red Channels*; and others who acted as go-betweens helping those summoned by HUAC to negotiate, on the one hand, the perils posed by the Committee and, on the other, the dangers of the blacklist established by the producers. The subculture functioned to make cooperation with HUAC as painless as possible and to help individuals get their names off the blacklist. For those who know little of HUAC and the personal and political damage it produced, *Naming Names* should be required reading.

Some caution, though, is advisable. Among the types of informers Navasky distinguishes is "the liberal informer," such individuals as James Wechsler and such organizations as the American Civil Liberties Union and Americans for Democratic Action. Wechsler, who bitterly fought the Committee but was outmaneuvered into giving it names, is among those who were "major contributors to the cultural context and moral environment that routinized betrayal." The ADA and such liberals as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. are arraigned by Navasky not only for supporting and praising Wechsler but because, like him, they were more committed to the anti-Communist cause than to the necessity of fighting HUAC and McCarthyism. A reader can very easily acquire the impression that by opposing both HUAC and the Communist party with its fellow-travelers, "the liberals" strengthened HUAC's hand. Indeed, although Navasky does not talk of liberals as a totally homogeneous group—he explicitly distinguishes at one point, for example, those around *Dissent* from "center liberals" like Schlesinger—it will be very hard for even the most careful reader to avoid being impressed by the perfidy of "the liberals." By the end of the book they emerge, if not as major villains in their own right, then as important accomplices—unindicted co-conspirators, so to speak.

This censure of liberals can be better understood, perhaps, if it is seen in the context of Navasky's characterization of HUAC's treatment of cooperative witnesses as "degradation ceremonies." Navasky draws upon the

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work of the sociologists Harold Garfinkel, who introduced the term, and Kai T. Erikson. A degradation ceremony is a ritual in which a person is stigmatized so that he is perceived by others as a different kind of person. Navasky quotes Erikson's point that when "deviant sanctions" are imposed upon a person his status within the community undergoes a change. Navasky, sounding very much like a sociologist himself, specifies the diverse functions served by the Committee's ritualistic insistence that witnesses name names: "From the perspective of the state, it functioned to reinforce group solidarity . . . reassured middle Americans of their patriotism," and, recalling a remark by Lillian Hellman, for the witnesses themselves "by denouncing fellow immigrants (or children of immigrants) before HUAC, one consolidated one's identification with the dominant society."

In the course of introducing a longish quotation from Erikson on "deviant sanctions" Navasky makes what appears to be the obligatory snide remark of one who has profited from a reading of scholarly work that "of course most scholarship of the period divorced itself from concern with the content of actions. . . . Even in the relatively new discipline of sociology confrontation with McCarthy[ism] . . . took the form of esoteric studies of conformity." Erikson is cited as one who can provide a "more useful framework." Yet the remark becomes more odd than nasty when one knows that the monograph from which Navasky quotes, *Wayward Puritans*, has made the issue of "conformity" one of its major themes, and that Erikson's discussion, ignored by Navasky, does indeed provide a "useful framework" for understanding HUAC.

Erikson argues that the integrity and identity of a group depends upon maintaining the boundaries that separate and distinguish it from other groups. When a person is labeled as a deviant the community is calling him to account and "it is making a statement about the nature and placement of its boundaries. It is declaring how much variability and diversity can be tolerated within the group. . . ." One of the functions of criminal trials or excommunication proceedings is to demonstrate "where the line is drawn between behavior that belongs in the special universe of the group and behavior that does not." Any one of these rites "sharpens the authority of the violated norms and restates where the boundaries of the group are located." This means that the "deviant and the conformist . . . are creatures of the same culture, inventions of the same imagination." At a later point Erikson writes that in the midst of the witchcraft hysteria "the sociologist in Cotton Mather began to notice that witches who terrorized the countryside were really very similar to the honest men who prosecuted them."

Applying Erikson's perspective we see that it is not that HUAC "reassured middle Americans about their patriotism" but that it sought to define the meaning or substance of American patriotism. The Committee's formal name indicated that it was in the business of drawing and maintaining boundaries by delineating *un-American* activities; by stigmatizing witnesses, the Committee was defining the politically acceptable behavior and thought. If it enhanced social solidarity it did so because it weakened the legitimacy of political conflict and tried to enforce consensus—conformity to a limited set of ideas.

If this was true of the Committee it was equally true of the CP, the "witches" HUAC was ostensibly hunting. This aspect of the problem is obscured by Navasky's implication that liberals reinforced the authority of HUAC and McCarthy by their anti-Communism. There is a certain surface plausibility to the argument, since the liberals' position seems to legitimize HUAC's and McCarthy's actions. But it is a distortion to say, for example, of the liberals' attitude that "as long as it succeeded in delivering up bona fide reds the [degradation] ceremony was to be supported." This is a variation of a classic Popular Front line: since the Soviet Union is fighting Fascism any criticism of it and the Communists aids the Fascists. The inarticulate major premise here is that the Communists were devoted democrats, a premise that could only be sustained by a committed avoidance

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of reality. To accept the premise and the reality it created distracted attention from the actual behavior of the CP; Navasky's linking of the liberals and McCarthyism serves a similar function. By the very nature of their persuasion liberals had to attack both HUAC and the Communists, since both were poisoning the political environment. That is, McCarthyism and Stalinism were in many ways two sides of the same coin, and one perhaps unintended consequence of Navasky's tendentious reading of the evidence is to blur that similarity.

But this complexity of modern political life is one that his story line cannot accommodate. That story builds to its climax with interviews (questioning) of cooperative witnesses (suspects) and the analysis (cross-examination) of their reasons (alibis) for cooperation.

As may be anticipated, the witnesses do not see their appearances before HUAC the way Hellman and Navasky do. As he categorizes them, there are, first, those who claim they gave the Committee only names they already had, and so "didn't hurt anybody." Some claimed they named only those who "deserved" to be named—"deserved everything they got," because the CP was a greater evil than HUAC. Others, such as the actor Lee J. Cobb, flat broke after resisting the Committee for over two years and with two children and a sick wife, claimed they had no real choice. Still others "invoked a higher morality whether to their family or to the moral obligation to reveal the dimensions of the Communist evil."

The one rationale Navasky examines in some detail is, "They deserved what they got." Many who explaind their behavior this way cited the assault on Albert Maltz as decisive in their change of heart about the CP, and Navasky describes it extensively. Early in 1946 Maltz published an article in the *New Masses* criticizing the idea that art is merely a weapon in the class struggle and should serve as the sole criterion in judging its worth. He was immediately attacked in the pages of the *New Masses* and the *Daily Worker* and also at party meetings that resembled, from the evidence Navasky presents, Chinese "struggle sessions." Two months later Maltz publicly recanted his errors in another article and apologized for the comfort his original one gave the party's enemies.

Many years later Maltz explained his actions to Navasky. He had joined the CP in 1935 and for him, as for many others, it represented an attempt to realize the ideals he had absorbed from "the Marxist classics . . . the noblest set of ideals ever penned by man." His commitment was not shaken by subsequent historical events. "We were starry-eyed and innocent." Still, his personal dissatisfaction with the theory of socialist realism grew, and by 1941 "I was in a fury about it. . . . I just knew from my own work that it wasn't right, that it was a straitjacket and I didn't like it."

Nonetheless, his response to the criticism was determined by "my desire not to be made to become a renegade—my desire not to be expelled from the Party." Although he would not be a member of the CP today, at that time he "considered it to be an honor to be a member of the Party, and by the way I haven't changed my mind about it now." The criticism forced him to ask, "Well, now who am I? . . . I wanted to remain a Communist." In his reply to his critics, therefore, he did not restate the ideas he still believed but the reply was not dictated by anyone "holding a gun to my head." After all, it was the "easiest thing in the world to leave the Party . . . all you did was quit."

Maltz is wrong: it was not at all easy for long-term members like himself to leave. To remain "starry-eyed and innocent" was not simple; any virgin can testify that it takes a considerable effort of will to retain one's innocence. Quitting the party meant acknowledging that one's life in it was a betrayal of the "noble ideals" that had attracted one in the first place and that one had willfully shut one's eyes to their violation. It also meant severing old personal relationships, being cast out as a "renegade" and treated as a pariah for being faithful to one's personal beliefs. To leave was more painful than remaining be-

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cause departure meant a disavowal of the significance of a major part of one's life. Maltz's experience was not unique; life in the party was hardly the "romance" many still conceive it to be. It was a life of continuous pressure to conform, and "deviant sanctions" were continually applied as a means of sharpening the party's authority and setting the limits of acceptable behavior and thought. Those who acquiesced reinforced, by their surrender to its pressure, the legitimacy of the party's demands and its definitions of reality.

The testing of Albert Maltz, then, was a rehearsal for HUAC, and it is appropriate to ask what lessons could have been learned from it by those caught up in what Navasky calls "the red subculture." Some must have learned the most obvious lesson: when a choice has to be made between one's own beliefs and values and those that authority decrees are important to the group, it is the latter that must take precedence—subordination of self to prevailing opinion is required of all.

Navasky reads the moral of the Maltz case differently, and some of the weaknesses of moral detective stories for the ends of education become apparent. He sees it as a "complex episode in the party's history"; it is not simply a case of pressure being applied to Maltz to conform to a doctrine. That episode "provides no rationale for the naming (and possible betrayal) of former comrades in the 1950's. . . . No excuse at all for acceding to [HUAC's] ritualistic requirement of names." It is a judgment that remains true enough even as we recognize it as one that satisfies the need of a prosecutor and a detective-story writer for a verdict of unequivocal guilt. But the ends of education require something more; they require that we ask whether the behavior of HUAC witnesses was *affected* by their experience in the party and its political environs. When the state applies pressure to its citizens to act in impermissible ways, the reaction to that pressure will be significantly determined by the citizens' previous political education and experience. To ignore the effects of life in "the red subculture" is to avoid the ambiguities of political reality, those complex dimensions of life that education helps us recognize and understand.

Toward the conclusion of *Naming Names* Navasky describes a correspondence between Maltz and Dalton Trumbo. Maltz was offended by and vehemently rejected a statement by Trumbo—who like Maltz had gone to jail for resisting HUAC—that both those who named names and those who went to jail were "victims." Of this running argument Navasky says, "Trumbo wins on polemics—he is funnier. Maltz wins on biology—viscerally one responds to his sense of outrage."

Maltz is wrong again, and this must be seen in the context of his life. He was a victim of the party as much as he was a victim of HUAC: both put him in the impossible position of choosing between principles that defined him as a person—his convictions as a writer in the case of the party and his commitments to comrades in the case of HUAC—and the demands of authority. People put up against the wall by those with power and authority and then degraded for their disobedience—that is a definition of victimization. Maltz's rejection of Trumbo's position is understandable; anything less would be to acknowledge the meaninglessness of his life in the party.

Trumbo is right because he is pointing to a political reality; the world cannot be neatly divided into innocent victims and guilty villains. To reflect upon experience—that is, to gain an education—demands that we recognize this. Navasky's gut reaction suggests a willed attempt to reduce a political life to the simple, unshadowed world of the detective story and the prosecutorial imagination. □

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Isaac Kramnick

Equal Opportunity and "The Race of Life"

A fair race was what Lyndon Johnson pleaded for in his 1965 commencement address at Howard University that ushered in the era of affirmation action.

> You do not take a person, who for years has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up the starting line of a race and then say "you are free to compete with all the others," and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.

Fifteen years later, Bakke, Weber, and the politics of affirmative action have stirred up a great public debate. The reasons are obvious. They raise sensitive questions of public policy and have grave implications for how we deal with one another, blacks and whites, men and women, workers and professionals, young and old. The focus of this debate has justifiably been on the here and now. But the doctrine of equal opportunity has occupied a central place in liberal ideology from the 17th century to the present, and the metaphor of life as a race was used centuries before Johnson's speech at Howard University.

Bakke, Weber, and the debate over affirmative action touch upon the deepest aspects of bourgeois liberalism. They are concerned with the marketplace, open or closed; with access to jobs and high status; with rewards to merit and talent; with privilege and the state. They involve the realization of self through work. They raise to public awareness the insecurity and anxiety inherent in a market society. As these issues are brought into public dialogue today, centuries-old beliefs lurk between every line of the briefs, learned articles, and position papers.

Central and enduring in liberalism is its unique conception of liberty and equality, rooted principally in attitudes toward work and the marketplace, toward achievement and talent. The revolutionary bourgeois attitude is best expressed in two famous cultural documents. The first is Beaumarchais' *Marriage of Figaro*, written in 1783 just before the French Revolution. The play, of course, was the basis of Mozart's opera. The plot, though complicated, is for our purposes, quite simple. It is built around the conflict between the great aristocrat Count Almaviva and the commoner, the hardworking, industrious barber, Figaro. The count seems almost to have outwitted Figaro in Act Five, which prompts Figaro to his famous denunciation:

> Just because you're a great Lord, you think you're a genius. Nobility, fortune, rank, position—you're so proud of those things. What have you done to deserve so many rewards? You went to the trouble of being born, and no more.

So subversive were these sentiments that the play was banned and only surfaced again in France after the Revolution had dealt even more definitively with the Almavivas.

The second document is from Thomas Mann, part of whose genius consisted in his ability to describe with meticulous accuracy European bourgeois civilization. In the *Buddenbrooks* Mann gives a much more vivid summary of these basic liberal beliefs than did Beaumarchais: his 19th-century liberal revolutionary Morten Schwartzkopf is speaking, criticizing a friend who has just spoken well of an aristocratic acquaintance:

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> They need only to be born to be the pick of everything, and look down on all the rest of us. While we, however hard we strive, cannot climb to their level. We, the bourgeoisie—the Third Estate as we have been called—we recognize only that nobility which consists of merit; we refuse to admit any longer the rights of the indolent aristocracy, we repudiate the class distinctions of the present day, we desire that all men should be free and equal. . . . So that all men, without distinction, shall be able to strive together and receive their reward according to their merit.

Writing at the turn of the 20th century when these values would be assaulted on the left and right (as he so beautifully depicted in his *Magic Mountain*), Mann's sense of liberalism is the same as Beaumarchais's. Basic to both the dreams of Figaro and of Schwartzkopf is a vision of society where the rule of privilege is replaced by equal opportunity and where individuals, now masters of their destiny, are no longer the slaves of history, tradition, or birth.

Figaro's and Schwartzkopf's liberal vision of an ideal society is still with us, especially in America. But it is not some timeless, eternal ideal of humanity found, like so much else of our culture, in the antique world of Greece or Rome or the Judeo-Christian tradition. It has a distinct history. It emerged at a specific historic moment, for specific reasons, and with specific intellectual justifications. That moment was, of course, the grand transformation wrought in the Europe of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries by the rise of Protestantism and capitalism. The traditional hierarchical world was replaced in Western Europe by the modern liberal world as we know it. Central to this transformation were new conceptions of self and work.

Ascription, the assignment to some preordained rank in life, came more and more to be replaced by achievement as the major definer of personal identity. Individuals increasingly came to define themselves as active subjects. They no longer tended to see their place in life as part of some natural, inevitable, and eternal plan. Their own enterprise and ability mattered; they possessed the opportunity (a key word) to determine their place through their own voluntary actions in this life and in this world.

Now, and this is the truly critical step, what one did in this world came soon to be understood primarily as what one did economically, what one did in terms of work. In the world of work one was the author of self. Individuality became an internal subjective quality; work became a concrete test and property a material extension of self. Inherent in this is the birth of the market society, where the allocation and distribution of such valuable things as power, wealth, and fame came to be seen as the result of countless individual decisions, not of some authoritative norms set by custom, God, or ruling-class decree. Who has more, who has less, whether some get any, is decided less by a social or moral consensus than by the free action of individual actors seeking their own gain in a context of continuous competition. What one has or gets, and therefore who one is, is no longer the appropriate reward fit to one's prescribed place; it is the product of what one can get and what one does in the competitive market.

The new theory of individuality had profound political implications. To be free, truly self-defining, master of the self, the individual had to eliminate all barriers to that individuality. So war was declared against religious restraint on free thought and against economic restraint on a free market. What I am describing is, of course, the gradual liquidation of the aristocratic world and its replacement by the liberal capitalist order. It is the crusade of Figaro and Schwartzkopf.

In the history of this crusade, we can discern familiar philosophic benchmarks. There is Thomas Hobbes's brilliant model of individualistic society, offered in the 1650s, with its vision of human beings as self-moving, self-directing independent machines, constantly competing with one another for power, wealth, and glory. A person's value or worth (a fascinating word if one thinks of it) is determined by the market; people are as the market values them. They are whatever their hard work can get. But competitive individuals, constantly seeking power and wealth, are

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constantly frightened lest the fruits of their work, their property, be stolen by other competing individuals. Enter then the liberal state with the principal task of protecting the fruits of industry and providing safety and a more commodious living for competitive individuals.

John Locke, in turn, introduces a moral revolution, one absolutely essential for the liberal world of individuality and equal opportunity. The unlimited acquisition of money and wealth, he argues, is neither unjust nor morally wrong. God (a very Protestant God) commanded men to work the earth, and those that were hardworking and industrious had the right to what they worked. While there were limits initially to what one could own in terms of what one could use, and what would not spoil, the invention of money put an end to these restraints. One does not eat money; there are no limits to its use; it never spoils. Since God has given "different degrees of industry" to men, some have more talent, and work harder than others. It is just and ethical, then, for them to have as many possessions as they want (as Locke says, to "heap as much of these durable things as he pleased"). The liberal state, then, as Locke never tires of telling us, is really constructed by property-owning individuals to protect their property.

This, indeed, is the critical point. If individuals are to define their individuality in terms of what they achieve, and if this sense of achievement is seen in terms of work in a market society where God-given talent and industry can have their play, then the barriers to unlimited accumulation have to fall. How else can achievement and sense of self be known if not by economic success?

Adam Smith's great contribution to the liberal theory of equality of opportunity was his conviction that at bottom all men were ambitious. Smith saw in bourgeois man a constant striving. Every individual, Smith wrote, "seeks to better his own condition." This ambition, he wrote in his *Wealth of Nations*, is "a desire which comes with us from the womb and never leaves us till we go into the grave." Smith pulled together the diverse strands of emerging liberal-bourgeois thought and produced the first complete statement of liberal social theory. Life, he wrote, was a "race for wealth and honours and preferements." What a revolution is in this metaphor! Life is no longer a hierarchical ladder or chain of being. It is a race. And this race should be fair; each and every runner in it should have an equal opportunity to win. Each competitor will "run as hard as he can, and strain every move and every muscle, in order to outstrip all his competitors." Interfering with other runners or seizing special advantages is "a violation of fair play." But merit, talent, virtue, and ability are, alas, no sure indicators of success, because government is too involved in the race, according to Smith. By reserving offices, power, and authority for the privileged it tilts the competition in favor of an idle aristocracy devoid of talent and virtue.

Smith has no illusions, however. Even if the unproductive aristocratic social order were eliminated and the race could be run with equal opportunity for all, only some would win. There would remain obvious differences in how each was able to "better his own condition." An unexpected note of pessimism sneaks in with Smith's acknowledgment that the race seldom provides "real satisfaction," and that it is often really "contemptible and trifling." Equal seldom, however, Smith admits, does anyone look at the race in such an "abstract and philosophical light"—and a good thing, too. The race, the competition, the illusion that everyone can win, and the alleged pleasures of victory are all necessary and worthwhile deceptions. "It is this deception which rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind."

II

Life as a race becomes the central metaphor in liberal ideology. One group of writers and activists, relatively unknown today, popularized the metaphor and its corollary of equal opportunity more than any other and deserves special mention. In England in the last two decades of the 18th century, an amazing group of radical Protestant dissenters (non-

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Anglicans, that is, Baptists, Presbyterians, Independents, Unitarians, and Quakers) articulated the principles of revolutionary bourgeois ideology in a devastating attack on the aristocracy and the aristocratic world view. The group included the Reverend Joseph Priestley, the eminent scientist, the Reverend Richard Price, Tom Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, James Burgh, Anna Barbauld, and others. They spoke for a dissenter community very much involved in the creation of a new England. Incredible achievers, the Protestant dissenters, while only 7 percent of the population, were found as leaders in every new and successful enterprise that marked the industrial revolution.

The dissenters operated at the margins of English life in the 18th century. For most of the century, it was technically illegal, for example, to carry on a Unitarian service. But much more onerous than this were the dreaded Test and Corporation Acts, which required all holders of offices under the British Crown to receive the sacrament according to the rites of the Anglican Church. The Acts also excluded nonsubscribers to the Anglican creed from any office in an incorporated municipality. Exclusion from public jobs meant that legions of these talented dissenters were denied one of the most important rewards of the successful, prestigious positions in the military or civil establishment.

Priestley warned that if preferment would not come to talented dissenters, then as "citizens of the world" they would get up and go to where their virtuous achievements were rewarded. This was shorthand for America and there, indeed, Priestley went, emigrating to Pennsylvania in 1794. The fiery Anna Barbauld, another dissenter, did not leave, however, and in making her case for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1790 she addressed the social issue straight on. It was no favor she asked, but "a natural and inalienable right," which she claimed. The issue was "power, place and influence."

> To exclude us from jobs is no more reasonable than to exclude all those above five feet high or those whose birthdays are before the summer solstice. These are arbitrary and whimsical distinctions. . . . We want civil offices. And why should citizens not aspire to civil offices? Why should not the fair field of generous competition be freely opened to every one. . . .

Barbauld articulates the very core of liberal-bourgeois social theory. In the competitive scramble of the marketplace, all citizens are equal in their opportunity to win: no one has built-in advantages of birth or status. Freedom involves unrestrained individual competition and equality, an absence of built-in handicaps. No cooperation, no collective good is sought.

These early bourgeois ideologues were extremely sensitive lest their assault on hierarchy and aristocratic privilege be construed as a mere leveling to an absolute equality of conditions. Nothing could be further from their intentions; bourgeois society, they assumed, would still have inequalities. Thomas Walker, a Manchester cotton manufacturer, dissenting layman and political activist, summed up the essence of this new radical creed in 1794:

> We do not seek an equality of wealth and possessions, but an equality of rights. What we seek is that all may be equally entitled to the protection and benefit of society, may equally have a voice in elections . . . and may have a fair opportunity of exerting to advantage any talents he may possess. The rule is not "let all mankind be perpetually equal." God and nature have forbidden it. But "let all mankind start fair in the race of life." The inequality derived from labour and successful enterprise, the result of superior industry and good fortune, is an inequality essential to the very existence of society.

What distressed Mary Wollstonecraft, particularly, was not only that in this race the winners were always men, but that women did not even bother to run. She lamented their socially conditioned lack of ambition. "Woman," she wrote in her *Vindication*, was just like the useless aristocrat "in her self complete" possessed of "all those frivolous accomplishments." Unlike bourgeois man she lacked any desire to improve herself.

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Women were socialized to avoid the race, to avoid the ambitious individual scramble for rewards to talent and merit. Wollstonecraft's message was that women should become more like the assertive men of the middle class. Instead, "women were always on the watch to please." Instead of "laudable ambitions," they were ruled by "romantic wavering feelings." Only education and political rights could fit them for the race.

These 18th-century dissenting radicals reveal a crucial contradiction at the heart of liberal social theory. The ideal of equality of opportunity at its origins was both an effort to reduce inequality and to perpetuate it. It was egalitarian at its birth because it lashed out at the exclusiveness of aristocratic privilege, but it sought to replace an aristocratic elite with a new elite, albeit one more broadly based on talent and merit. Equality of opportunity is not really a theory of equality, but of justified and morally acceptable inequality. What can legitimate some having more than others? Only that all have had an equal oportunity to have more. Equality for liberals really means fairness. Let the race be fair, let all have an equal chance to win.

Equality of opportunity presumes a noncooperative vision of society. There is no ideal of community or quest for the common good. Individuals compete on an equal footing and as in any race, some win, others lose. According to the theory, those that win do so because they are more talented and work harder than the losers. Equality of opportunity presumes that people have different abilities and talents. This basic human inequality in talents will, in a free society, legitimize status differentials. The society is free if the race is fair. The race is not fair; there is no equality of opportunity when freedom to realize oneself through success and achievement is impaired, and this occurs whenever ethical, religious, or social limitations are placed on economic activity, whenever governments interfere in the race by favoring some privileged class, whose members could not win on their own. Equality of opportunity, then, is historically the ideal of the revolutionary middle class, perhaps the most powerful weapon in its battle, ultimately successful, to end the rule of aristocratic privilege.

III

In the 19th century, two important social groups called upon this doctrine of equal opportunity: women, again, and the working class. John Stuart Mill in his essay *The Subjugation of Women* (1860) offers the classic plea that equality of opportunity be extended to women. All the themes discussed here are repeated. Women are ambitious, he writes; they are not totally socialized to be different from men. The problem is that they are barred from market society. They are not allowed to achieve, to compete freely, to have the status they want. They are treated by the modern liberal as if they were living in the feudal, precapitalist world. They were perceived as creatures of status and told to accept their dependent place. They have no opportunity to be or do anything else, no internal subjective mastery and direction of self. In short, the liberal revolution has passed them by. Mill's essay is one long plea for the extension of liberal emancipation to women. He even invokes Figaro. Men rule like aristocrats, regardless of their merit, simply because they have taken the trouble to be born.

The place of the laboring poor in liberal social theory is ambivalent at best. On the one hand, 17th- and 18th-century theorists saw the competitive society, the race of life, peopled only by middle-class men. Equal opportunity was their subversive weapon against the world of privilege. Workers, like women, lived outside market society. They were expected to accept their place as dependent subordinates barred from the race. This is clearly how Locke and Smith perceived the working class, and why many writers opposed education for the poor lest they become discontented and seek ambitiously to join or even replace their middle-class betters. One of the serious crimes in the ante-bellum South was teaching a slave to read and write; one of the great themes of feminism from Wollstonecraft to this day is equal access to education.

Alongside a conviction that the laboring

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poor are excluded from the race, that they are naturally dependent, there is in liberal theory another strain insisting that they be treated as if they were free contracting individuals, equal members of market society. This may take the form of ideological myth, rags to riches, Horatio Alger, and so on, or a more commonplace defense of laissez-faire. Workers are surely free individuals, and if they contract for low or subsistence wages or for long hours, it's their own voluntary act. The state ought not to intervene in their behalf. They are free individuals who can raise themselves by talent and hard work, just as their employers have done.

By the latter part of the 19th century, more and more European liberals began to have second thoughts and to call upon the state to protect workers with factory legislation, health and education acts, and so on. This came much later (not, indeed, until deep into this century) in America. A principal theorist of this shift in liberal attitudes was T. H. Green, the Oxford philosopher. What Green did in the 1870s was, in fact, to call upon the doctrine of equal opportunity to assist the working-class cause. Workers, he wrote, were not in fact free to act voluntarily in the market. Poorly paid, uneducated, starving, or sick, they could not make the best of themselves; they could not compete on equal terms. He called upon the state, therefore, to establish the conditions that would enable workers to join the race. This meant public schools, factory laws, prohibition, and public health.

But the continuous liberal commitment to individuality and equal opportunity persists in Green's writings. Once that ideal had involved emancipating the individual from feudal restrictions, opening up the market. Now, in the writings of Green, it involved restricting market freedoms to provide conditions that would allow the proletariat to acquire the skills necessary to compete. The state had to augment workers' power and resources, even at the expense of cherished contractual rights. The aim, however, is the same as it was earlier: a fair race. The liberal model endures in T. H. Green. He still assumes that life is a scramble for self-realization through achievement and success, and that this is a moral vision of society and of life.

We can readily recognize T. H. Green's vision as the ideology of the American New Deal in the 20th century. T. H. Green is, in fact, an intellectual ancestor of all those defenders of state action from the New Deal to the present whom Americans describe in their own peculiar way as liberals. But they are liberals! They are committed ultimately to individualism, equal opportunity, and a competitive society.

And here we return to the LBJ commencement speech at Howard University. Racial issues were brought to political saliency in this century by these very same liberal descendants of T. H. Green. Their commitment is to that same liberal vision of the race of life. Positive state action is needed, it is argued, to enable blacks to compete on equal terms—which brings us full-circle back to Lyndon Johnson, Bakke, and Weber.

III

One often-noted feature of the contemporary crisis is the pervasive anxiety among whites (and men in general) about the possible loss of status, wealth, and privilege in the wake of an aggressive affirmative action policy. This, too, is nothing new. It has always been a part of the historical legacy of liberal ideology. For all its optimism, assertiveness, and self-confidence, liberalism has another face, a frightened and fearful view of market society and the race of life as fraught with dangers, the most horrible of which, in fact, is the possibility of losing.

A convincing case can be made (as it was 20 years ago by Sheldon Wolin) that liberal social theorists of the 17th and 18th centuries presumed fear and anxiety to be the basic motive in human nature that first sets men and women running—or, in Smith's words, "rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind." We are, of course, familiar with the religious interpretation of this linkage from the more recent writings of Max Weber and R. H. Tawney, but less

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familiar with the explicit claims of the early liberals themselves. Locke, for example, held in his *Essay on Human Understanding* that "the chief, if not the only spur to human industry and action is uneasiness." This feeling of uneasiness, a desire for "some absent good," drives men to enterprise. But men are ever fearful; once driven to the race they never lose their uneasiness. They are permanently cursed, wrote Locke, with "an itch after honour, power, and riches," which in turn unleashes more "fantastical uneasiness."

Anxiety forever haunts bourgeois man. "Fear and anxiety," Smith wrote, are the "two great tormentors of the human breast." They persist because the race of life has winners and losers and, above all else, bourgeois man fears failure. For Bentham all life was "a universal scramble" for "money, power and prestige," and the "suffering from loss," he wrote, was infinitely greater than "the enjoyment from gain." For Smith the possibility of losing ground was "worse than death."

Runners in the race of life fear losing what they have, or losing simply, because to lose is to become a nonperson. Only success in the marketplace brings the notice and valuation of others. To understand the fear and anxiety of whites and males in the face of affirmative action today one need only reread these early liberal theorists who knew very well what insecurity lurks in the heart of bourgeois man. To be a loser is to be invisible, according to Smith in his *Theory of Moral Sentiment*:

> What are the advantages which we propose by that great purpose of human life which we call bettering our condition? To be observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of . . . the poor man, on the contrary, is ashamed of his poverty. He feels that it . . . places him out of the sight of mankind. . . . To feel that we are taken no notice of, necessarily damps the most agreeable hope, and disappoints the most ardent desire, of human nature. The poor man goes out and comes in unheeded, and when in the midst of a crowd is in the same obscurity as if shut up in his own house. . . . They turn away their eyes from him.

John Adams repeated this judgment on failure 132 years later in his *Discourses on Davila*. The pain of being a loser consisted not so much in being hated as in being invisible. What motivated men to public and economic activity was a passion for distinction, "the desire to be observed, considered, esteemed, praised, beloved and admired by his fellows." Of those who failed in this quest he wrote:

> Mankind takes no notice of him. He rambles and wanders unheeded. In the midst of a crowd, at church, in the market, at a play, at an execution, or coronation, he is in such obscurity as he would be in a garret or a cellar. He is not disapproved, censured, or reproached, he is only not seen.

Anxiety over failure in the race of life, over becoming invisible, haunts today's marketplace as it did the world of Smith and Adams. And here is the heart of the matter, the grand historical reversal produced by today's crisis of liberal ideology. What whites and men fear in the loss of wealth and status is what the poor, women, and blacks have experienced throughout liberal hegemony. But the age-old invisibility of these latter groups and the fear of invisibility among today's privileged groups follow alike from the inner logic of liberal ideology, where self-esteem and a sense of personality are inextricably tied to degrees of accumulation and success in the race of life.

V

We can now better appreciate the profound impact of Bakke, Weber, and affirmative action on our lives. They are much more than political bombshells. They involve an intellectual crisis that goes to the very heart of liberalism. Two important forms of liberal doctrine are being played off against one another. There is the traditional 18th-century middle-class meritocratic ideal, and there is the latter-day liberal vision of intervention in the race of life to aid and perhaps award victory to handicapped competitors. A doctrine originally designed to serve the class interests of the talented "have-nots" against the untalented "haves" now pits the talented

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"haves" against the allegedly untalented "have-nots." Here is the real source of contemporary tension. In historical terms, the talented class has remained the same. What has happened, however, is that it has changed from a revolutionary class to the status quo defender of a new elite, the meritocracy. Its ideology remains the same: that is why certain social policies of recent years, for instance, head-start programs, were not challenged by the meritocrats. Unlike affirmative action, giving children intensive and special preschooling is quite compatible with simply making the race fair. It doesn't definitely give the victory, that is, jobs or medical degrees, to anyone, especially not to anyone seen as untalented and therefore undeserving.

Each of the issues raised in the current debate speaks to a part of the liberal ideological heritage. Are individuals being treated unfairly in the effort to deal equally with groups? Are fundamental beliefs about individual responsibility for achievement and success being violated? Can groups or individuals ever be in a truly competitive position leading to equal opportunity? Can past privations be countered by eliminating present competitive disadvantages? Are governments once again interfering with the race of life and saying who will win? Is this being done not in terms of talent but to meet political considerations? Is past injustice a more solid moral basis of desert than talent? As we grapple with these issues we must realize how the very language of our dilemmas presumes a framework of beliefs centering on individuality, equality of opportunity, and a market society. These are values at the very core of liberal society, and since Bakke, Weber, and affirmative action involve contradictions and strains within that set of values, the current crisis is bound to be far-reaching and painful.

But we ought also to be clear that certain questions are not confronted by the ideological tradition traced here. What if our talents are in fact ascriptive, given to us by dint not of our worth and intrinsic achievements or merit, but simply, as Figaro and Schwartzkopf noted, by our being born? What if the basic liberal assumptions about the conditioning role of environment, education, and nurturing are wrong? Is it not then possible that the distribution of valuable things to the talented is inherently unjust to those born less privileged?

There are other questions Bakke and Weber do not confront: Is life truly a race? Is life a marketplace? Is it basic to our humanity to compete with one another? Are winners real people and losers deservedly unnoticed and invisible? Is a race with winners and losers ever fair or moral, no matter how equal the conditions at the starting line? The time has come to go beyond the framework of the current debate and question the very metaphors and assumptions that inform both it and the problems it has created. Difficult as it may be, the time has come to abandon our old and dear friends, Figaro and Schwartzkopf.

What might a new world view look like? It would involve a fundamental abandonment of our sense of life as a competitive race. This means that some appealing suggestions for changing public policy premised on this view would have to be called inadequate. Expanding the number of places in medical schools or the number of medical schools themselves, providing more jobs in the building trades, more jobs for faculty in an expanded system of higher education—all these are no doubt desirable, but in the end they serve merely to enlarge the field of runners. Just as quotas and affirmative action often set blacks to run only with other blacks, whites only with other whites, so a larger pie means simply a larger race. Even more far-reaching alternatives preserve the competitive race. Proposals to broaden the notion of deserving talent and merit beyond successful market skills and to reward the generous, the loving, the kind, the good, the cooperative would again simply provide new races. The same can be said for instituting nonpecuniary rewards for work, effort, and achievement. A society of Stakhanovites is no more congenial, for by definition it assumes the continuation of the race, albeit for lower stakes. Similarly, the lower-

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ing of stakes inherent in proposals that would narrow the range of prizes is mere tinkering. It ends the ability of winners to set their own prizes, to be sure, but it keeps the race intact. Like affirmative action itself, all these proposals would promote greater justice and equality. They are but temporary expedients, however, for they assume the context of a competitive race.

One possible way to transcend the world of Figaro and Schwartzkopf is a retreat from meritocracy itself, a tabooed subject for intellectuals whose very place in society may well be owed to that principle. One need not be one of Michael Young's fanciful "prols" to propose a less slavish preoccupation with merit and talent in our society. Imagine the transformation of American life that would come from implementing Robert Woolf's suggestion of two decades ago that students be assigned to universities at random by computers. What would America look like if random chance distributed as many valuable things as test scores did? How essential is the expert medical education sought by Bakke to the health needs of inner cities or rural America? What are the trade-offs between pushing the advance of America's highly technological medicine for the few or seeking an improved health system for the many provided by a less than expert corps of lay practitioners emphasizing prevention and lacking the talents of an expertly trained medical elite? Might this calculation not be made in other areas of society as well, with greater justice and equality flowing from less obsession with meritocracy?

Abandoning the worship of talent and merit might also introduce new attitudes to work. Capitalists (and even Marxists) are convinced that individuals find fulfillment primarily through productive work. But why should work alone or even principally define one's sense of self? This is not to advocate an updated Consciousness III, but to offer the heretical suggestion that a sense of identity can come just as meaningfully from play, love, spirituality, place or affiliation, as from work. To transcend Figaro and Schwartzkopf may well require a return to some of what they in fact repudiated. Much of the ambience of affirmative action already points to a renaissance of a world where extrinsic affiliation not individual achievement is critical, where ascriptive identity with a geographic place, a race, a sex, or ethnic group helps define one's sense of self, rather than simply the unique talent or merit of that self. This utopian ideal need not revive the entire world that was lost to liberal hegemony. Nor is romantic nostalgia for the stable, ordered, and noncompetitive Middle Ages what I would offer. It is a moral economy, as E. P. Thompson has called it, which flourished before the advent of the free economy of market society, that I want to revive. Drawn from diverse sources, the moral economy assumes that buying and selling is subordinate to the moral purposes of community and social life. It need not be a completely socialist economy with collectivization of the means of production. A moral and natural economy, according to Aristotle, could well blend private ownership of property with public and common use. "Moral goodness," he wrote, "will ensure that the property of each is made to serve the use of all." Public interests and social needs, not individual free choices in the pursuit of private gain, would be the organizing principle of a moral economic life.

In a moral economy individual freedom in the market is subordinate to the constraints of a moral and social consensus insisting that there are natural levels of profit, of income, and of wealth; that the poor have rights to a decent life; that there are moral limits to accumulation. The sense of self in a moral economy comes not from success or failure in the competitive market but from the identification with and the quest to realize the collective moral purpose to which individual economic activity is ultimately subject. A moral economy in the 1980s requires restricting the freedom of economic actors. Just as affirmative action temporarily introduces moral purpose and public good into the market economy while restricting the play of free choice, so the solution to most of our contemporary ills requires public restraint of market freedom. Only in a moral economy

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can the inevitable bourgeois linkage of work and success with personal identity be broken. And only then can the preoccupation with equal opportunity be transcended, and affirmative action redefined to encompass real equality.

Since metaphors have hovered closely over these reflections, let me end by offering another. Life should be neither a race nor a chain of being; it should be understood as a kind of play. Races begin and end; they must have winners and losers. One runs not only against the others in adjoining lanes, but against the records and achievements of those running in other races or of all those who have ever run. Play need never end, nor need it have winners and losers. In play fulfillment and joy is a product of the common purpose, the shared experience. A market economy is inevitably a race; a moral economy can be play.

There was a time in the West when play not races preoccupied us. Huizinga noted in his *Homo Ludens* that the bourgeois era with its utilitarianism, its efficiency, its preoccupation with serious work, has killed off what he called the "play-factor" in social life and ended the imaginative and fanciful sense of self. Another victim has surely been the moral sense of self. Whatever just and progressive purposes the ideal of equal opportunity has served at various historical moments, it still envisages life as a war of all against all with persons of worth as victor. The first great utopian thinker knew already that such an ideal was morally unsatisfactory. Plato wrote:

> Every man and every woman should live life accordingly, and play the noblest games, and be of another mind from what they are at present. For they deem war a serious thing, though in war there is neither play nor culture worthy the name, which are the things we deem most serious. Hence all must live in peace as well as they possibly can. What, then, is the right way of living? Life must be lived as play, playing certain games, making sacrifices, singing and dancing. □

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Claude Lanzmann

From the Holocaust to "Holocaust"

At the end of the war, the massive revelations of the genocide committed against the Jewish people—and of the way it was perpetrated—stunned the Western world. (The countries of Eastern Europe, long familiar with anti-Semitism, were not exempt from this reaction.) Infected to the marrow, as the European nations were, by the poison of anti-Semitism—and nearly all knowing themselves to be guilty in varying degrees—they recognized and understood at once, with instant, lightning certainty, the unique and unconscionable nature of the crime. Everything was now clear; no debate, no protest, no denial was possible. The Nazi crime was both unprecedented and unsurpassable—unsurpassable because, as we shall see, it was an absolute crime.

What gave rise to this horrified wordlessness was not the fact that, once again, the Jews had been the appointed victims: the European nations were not unaccustomed to such practices; and, indeed, the Holocaust could not have taken place had not two thousand years of persecution and anti-Jewish hatred paved the way for it everywhere. No, stupefaction arose from the unbearable discovery that anti-Semitism, a patrimony and passion the nations shared, could reach such extremes, and end in a slaughter unparalleled in the history of mankind. Things had gone too far: if anti-Semitism had led to Auschwitz, if anti-Jewish passion had resulted in Auschwitz, then anti-Semitism must be irrevocably banished. The feeling that prevailed at the time was that, this once, the Jewish people had paid the supreme price and for all time. Everything seemed to suggest that the Holocaust had established forever that theoretically anti-Semitism had become impossible.

The planned, methodical bureaucratic massacre of six million Jews was a long-term enterprise, carried out patiently and without passion in the name of ideological imperatives that were openly stated and explained. From the magnitude of the massacre the human species took the staggering measure of its capacity to commit crimes against itself. For indeed it was mankind itself that was challenged by the monstrous crime perpetrated against the Jewish people. In order to judge the Holocaust, to fully grasp it, no ordinary existing laws are adequate; it has been necessary to resort to an entirely new juridical-metaphysical concept; namely, that of a "crime against humanity."

It was, factually, literally, a crime against the human essence, a metaphysical crime committed on the person of each murdered Jew against the being of Man. Once again—and one must hope, for the last time—the Jews performed their role of witness people. The cry that will rise into the skies of Auschwitz and Treblinka until the end of time testifies to the unsurpassable limits of inhumanity of which mankind is capable. There is and will be nothing with which Auschwitz and Treblinka can be compared. No one can mistake it, no one is so obscenely impudent as to deny the Holocaust its specific character, its uniqueness, by attenuating it, by burying it in a thesis of universal evil, by subsuming it under generalities such as "the horrors of war" or "the victims of fascism." Despite the

Translated and reprinted with permission from *Les Temps Modernes*, and the author. Claude Lanzmann is making a film on the Holocaust, and this article represents his statement on the making of that film.

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millions of dead on both sides, despite the terror of Hiroshima or Dresden, we know that the six million murdered Jews were not victims like the others.

Their extermination is a crime of a different nature, of a different quality; it is a nameless crime, which the Nazi assassins themselves dared not name, as if by doing so they would have made it impossible to enact. It was, literally, an unnameable crime.

To say that the Holocaust is unique and can be compared with nothing else does not imply that it should be regarded as an aberrant phenomenon, which eludes intellectual or conceptual grasp, which occurred outside history or is to be denied the status of a historical event. On the contrary, I consider the Holocaust an unqualifiedly historical event, the monstrous, yes, but legitimate product of the history of the Western World. My film means to deal with this crucial aspect in the utmost detail and precision.

But the responsibility and guilt of most nations are too grave, their remorse and shame are too great, the crime is too burdensome: the Holocaust encumbers the conscience of the modern world like an indigestible patrimony. After the stunned acknowledgment of the brutal fact of the extermination in the years following the Second World War, after the recognition of the immeasurable nature of the crime, public response has steadily tended to reverse itself. For the most part, the Holocaust has not been assimilated as a specific historical event, and one may doubt that it ever will be.

Indeed, only some thirty years after the catastrophe we are witnessing an extraordinary phenomenon of rejection. The "honeymoon" between the Jewish people and the world has definitely come to an end and we can take the measure of our illusion: like the indestructible phoenix, anti-Semitism is arising virtually everywhere from its own ashes, wearing its ancient disguises or the more modern, "democratic" mask of anti-Zionism. As for the Holocaust, the keynote seems to be "How do we get rid of it?" In the East as well as in the West, on the right as well as on the left, people are trying in every way to be quit of it, to forget it without ever having understood it, to falsify it, to deny it. The revival of anti-Semitism and the rejection of the Holocaust are dialectically interrelated. The true pursuit of anti-Semitism is the death of the Jew; therefore, the anti-Semite must deny that the extermination ever happened so as to regain the unhindered right to kill again.

The Holocaust is rejected by banalizing it, trivializing it, or excising it from history with the pretext that it was only an aberration.

After all, what happened to the Jews is common enough, nothing to make a great fuss about. History is one long series of massacres, and their names come tumbling to our lips—the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, the genocide of the Armenians in 1915, the Gulag, the tortures in Algeria, segregationist violence in the U.S.A. or Tell el Zatar. Thus Tell el Zatar has become the Warsaw ghetto (an identification coldly made by some French papers a year ago). As for Sultan Abdul Hamid's Turkey, as everyone knows, it was the most developed and most modern nation in the Western world, the motherland of Goethe as well as of Kant and Schiller, the home of the Ruhr magnates, of Krupp and I. G. Farben. And the Sultan, too—in this a forerunner of Adolf Hitler—had established a coherent, universally applicable doctrine to justify the annihilation of the Armenians. One may make step-by-step comparisons among atrocities and point out the ideological flaws, absurdities, and perversities. But the goal has been attained: after a while, people no longer know what anything is about, everything is indistinguishable; the Holocaust has lost its unique particularity, it has been conjured away.

In this connection, it is by no means sure that the success of the American TV serial that was entitled *Holocaust* should be taken as a sign of an awakening of conscience. The sudden discovery of the martyrdom of the Jews, and the compassion it evoked among an immense TV audience is, perhaps, the latest ruse of a kind of history that disposes of the Holocaust's singularity even as it claims

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to be portraying it. The treatment and the means used are highly suspect. The Jewish family with which millions of Americans and Germans are said to have identified was chosen precisely so that such an identification would be possible. In fact, and this is the essential point, the Jewish victims in the TV film are in no way distinguishable from the spectators or, for that matter, from their executioners. In order to make the "humanity" of these Jews obvious, to insure that it would be recognized and felt, every trait that could have distinguished them was effaced, every trace of otherness was erased, and one was presented with an "assimilated" family; most of the actors were not Jewish. The contrary would have been far more appropriate: the humanity of the victims should have been made all the more evident and profound for us by virtue of their seeming different from the outset.

Could the world's television viewers have identified as readily with the Jewish men and women of Poland, of the Ukraine, or of Belorussia, with their different clothing, their traditions, their particular mannerisms, their strangeness?

The characters in the American documentary never lose their "humanity," even in the gas chambers. (Only a cast-iron disposition would dare represent what went on there; none of those who entered ever returned to tell us about it.) In *Holocaust*, people await death gravely and with dignity, as good form prescribes. In real life, things were different. After years of ghetto confinement, terror, humiliation, and hunger, the people who lined up in rows of five were driven by whips and bludgeons, and knocked against each other as they entered the death chambers; they had neither the leisure nor the composure to die nobly. To show what really happened would have been unendurable. At the least, it would have precluded conscience-salving "identification." However, the film is a work of fiction. And in this instance, because the reality defies the resources of any fiction, *Holocaust* perpetrates a lie, a moral crime; it assassinates memory.

The Holocaust is unique because it created a circle of flame around itself, a boundary not to be crossed since horror in the absolute degree cannot be communicated. To pretend that one has done so is to commit the gravest of transgressions. One must speak out and yet keep silent at the same time, knowing that in this case silence is the most authentic form of speech—maintaining, as in the eye of a hurricane, a protected, safe zone that is not to be entered. Here, to transgress or to trivialize are alike. The Hollywood serial transgresses because it trivializes, destroying the unique nature of the Holocaust, the thing that removes it from any comparison, that makes it the worst of all crimes to have been or ever to be committed.

Let me also say—and this is essential—that in my view anti-Semitism has an absolute specificity that can in no way be reduced to political or racial conflicts as they are generally understood. Anti-Semitism is much more than, and entirely different from, a particular instance of racism. Just as the destiny and the history of the Jewish people can be compared with no other, so also the cyclic character of anti-Jewish persecution and hatred (intense periods followed by remissions, wild hopes always shattered), the duration and the persistence of the persecution, the force and the extent of that hatred, with all the mythical and phantasmal spinoffs it constantly generates, make anti-Semitism a unique phenomenon and, sadly, make the periodic attempts to abate it ridiculous. The prodigious will-to-life of the Jewish people accounts for the persistence and the escalation of anti-Semitic hatred, which reached its peak in the Holocaust. Raul Hilberg has summed this up in a splendid terse formula. "Christian missionaries had indeed said, 'You have no right to live among us as Jews'; the secular leaders who followed had proclaimed, 'You have no right to live among us.' The German Nazis finally decreed, 'You have no right to live.'"

To those today who regard the Holocaust as an anomaly, as an aberration so perfect that it eludes any appraisal, any historical

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interpretation, Hilberg's quotation would provide one response. Here are a few others:

First of all—if indeed it is a question of an aberration—the Jews have been its victims. The aberration lies at the very core of their history, it lays the foundation of that history, and they may be forgiven for wanting to find out its meaning. Twelve years of systematic persecution, of a slow process of destruction, carried out with the knowledge and in full view of the world and resulting in the annihilation of one-third of the Jewish people, allow them at least to ask themselves what made this anomaly possible.

However, essentially what the aberration theory aims to accomplish today is to get rid of the idea that any historical responsibility lies with Germany and the other nations. Yet the Holocaust was not the work of a handful of madmen. With regard to Germany, the process of destruction could only have been carried through on the basis of a general consensus of the German nation. The annihilation of six million Jews was an extremely difficult and complicated task, which posed numerous and vast problems for the murderers: in order to carry it out, the active, patient participation of the whole administrative machinery of a large modern state was required.

Furthermore, Germany relied on the existence of an aggressively anti-Semitic world: Poland, Hungary, Rumania, the U.S.S.R.—not to mention others—were anti-Semitic. The famous Madagascar plan began as a Polish idea (the 1936 Lepecki Commission), and M. Georges Bonnet, the French minister of foreign affairs, coolly talked the matter over with von Ribbentrop. Mr. Ruthmund, the Swiss chief of police, was the first person responsible, as early as 1938, for the requirement that Jewish German refugees have their passports stamped with the letter "J." When Hitler condemned the Jews, he was not speaking an exotic foreign language; he was "communicating," he was understood and he knew he was understood. (See his comments after the Evian conference stalemate, or the Rublee-Schacht plan, or the entries in Goebbels's diary for 1942-43: "I am convinced that, deep down, the democracies are not dissatisfied that we should rid them of the 'Jewish trash' ['*Jüdischen Riff-Raff*'].")

If the democracies had been actively opposed to the persecution, or—what amounts to the same—had they opened their doors to the Jews and said, "You don't want them, so be it; we'll take them," the Holocaust would not have taken place or, at least, would never have reached such dimensions. The Holocaust was made possible in the first place because nations washed their hands of the Jewish persecution, and left the Nazis alone with the "problem." Such are the historical responsibilities that one can follow, case by case, stage by stage, up to and including the shameful failure to rescue the Jews of Hungary: "What am I to do with one million Jews?" Lord Moyne, then the British high commissioner in Egypt, asked.

We must hold fast to both ends of the chain: The Holocaust is unique but not aberrant. It is not the doing of a group of irresponsible, atypical criminals, but, on the contrary, must be viewed as the expression of deep-seated tendencies in Western civilization. Basically, everyone agreed to the killing of those for whom there was no place.

Today the aberration theory of the Holocaust also allows for a new appraisal, a reevaluation of Nazism, and at last permits Germany to restore the missing link in its history. For thirty years Germany was unable to face up to the Holocaust, and took the tack of pretending that Nazism had never existed. One simply did not mention Nazism. Germany was fat and affluent, but it lacked a past, and her young men—those who are today between thirty and forty years old—were zombies presumably sprung up from nowhere. This discreet silence on the part of the great majority of Germans had one merit at least: implicitly it acknowledged that the Jewish question was absolutely central to Nazi ideology and practice; it admitted that the destruction of the Jews had been the very core of Nazism, that the Holocaust had been the only issue of Nazism.[1] Everything now

[1] I entirely subscribe to the idea that the war waged by Hitler was, fundamentally, *"a war against the Jews."* The launching of the offensive in the East and the working up of the "Final Solution" were organically con-

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has changed: time has done its work, new generations of Germans have come who have no reason not to wish to be linked to their history, a history that they have never been taught. And then, too, the Jewish people have survived; they are more alive than ever; and finally and above all, the State of Israel exists and, in its turn, engages in violence. Through the instrument of their state, *the Jews have provided themselves with the means to resort to institutionalized violence*.[2]

The Jews also kill. This demonstrable fact is wonderful, liberating ("and what if the Jews were Nazis themselves!"). It delivers one from the old feeling of guilt and makes it possible to rewrite the history of Germany, integrating Nazism in it and while not completely denying the Holocaust, turning it into a secondary phenomenon of little consequence. Auschwitz is virtually obliterated. This is now the trend among even reputedly serious German historians, and this is the sense of the German films now being shown in Europe. The smashing success Joachim Fest's film *Hitler, a Career* has met with in Germany has no other explanation: in it are glorified—one is free at last to do this—the "positive aspects" of Hitler the man and his accomplishment. The Holocaust is pushed far into the background; that is the bad aspect of the man and of a period that in other respects had its excellent sides. And it is not at all certain that the bad outweighs the good; at the least, they may balance out evenly. In this way, anti-Jewish hatred becomes merely a personal aberration of Hitler's: "It's true, he didn't like Jews and he went too far." Does the aberration, then, lie in his own aversion or in the exaggeration of that aversion; does it lie in anti-Semitism or in an "excess" of anti-Semitism? In any case, one has come full circle: anti-Semitism, which had previously been banished and condemned to an underground existence, can now surface in broad daylight, based on and justified by reason of the very being of the Jew, with all the Jew's traditional characteristics. Thus the film of R. W. Fassbinder and Daniel Schmidt *The Shadow of Angels* accepts with the most astounding innocence, as if it had reinvented them, all the stereotypes in the Nazi anti-Semitic lexicon.

This, then, is where we stand after thirty years. *The first question is not "How was the Holocaust possible?"* but *"How is it possible, thirty years after the Holocaust, that we should be where we are?"*

In point of fact, a tragic parallel can be drawn between the forgetting and the rejection of the Holocaust, on the one hand, and, on the other, the conditions that made it possible. Just as the Jews were murdered in the most heartrending solitude—derelict ears did not hear their calls for help, because, after all, the death of the Jews was only an insignificant happening in the context of universal history—so to remember this crime against humanity (which the Holocaust was) will not be the duty, the mission, the sacred trust of all mankind but something for Jews to harp on. Just as our people were left alone face to face with their exterminators, so will we remain alone to live with the gaping wound of a measureless crime.

As the philosopher Emil Fackenheim has admirably put it: "For us, the murdered Jews of Europe are not merely the past, they are

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joined. The East was not only the great reservoir of Jewry; in the hallucinatory German *Weltanschauung* it was also the place of absolute indefiniteness, of the shapeless, the vague. *Everything is possible in the East*; people are exterminated in the East, people are deported from West to East (cf. the protocols of the Wannsee conference: "*Von Westen nach Osten durchkämmen*" (sweep from West to East). *The East is unsurpassed slaughter country*.

[2] Violence and Nonviolence, the relation between Jews and violence, this is another chapter—an essential one. From the massacre of innocent people in Ponary, Sdolbunov, and Babi-Yar; from naked women running in rows of five to the gas chambers in Treblinka, terrified by the whips of the Ukranian guards, to the heroism of the Jewish soldiers of modern Israel, not forgetting the desperate rebellion in the extermination camp of Sobibor or the Warsaw ghetto, *the reappropriation of violence* by Jews is a central problem. No matter how brave certain groups and individuals were, the European Jews as a whole were condemned in advance because, being deprived of a *political status*, being turned into stateless persons by a bureaucratic definition, they had become "superfluous," "redundant," living-dead. In the world of nation states, where the only protection one may enjoy is that of the state, they stood no chance.

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the presence of an absence." This means that they have begot us, that they beget us daily, that we are born of them and will forever be born and reborn of them. Israelis and Diaspora Jews alike, we are anchored to (and in) the Holocaust, whose consequences and implications, far from disappearing with time, are continually and more deeply revealed to us. The destruction of six million of our people—an attempt to annihilate the entire people—has radically modified the Jewish universe, the Jews' perception of themselves, and their attitude toward others. The inflexibility of Israeli policy, so deplored and allegedly the root cause of its isolation, stems precisely from the fact that Israel knows it is the only—absolutely the only—guarantor of the sacred oath "Never Again," which we had believed all nations would subscribe to after Auschwitz.

Until now, all films dealing with the Holocaust have tried to generate it by using the expedients of history and chronological development. Generally, they begin in 1933, when the Nazis came to power—but sometimes earlier, presenting the various currents of German anti-Semitism in the 19th century (for instance, the *Volk* ideology, formation of the German national conscience) and seek to explain, year by year, step by step—one might say almost harmoniously—how these developments led to extermination. As if the extermination of six million men, women, and children, as if such a massacre could be "generated."

Obviously, there are reasons and explanations for the destruction of six million Jews: Adolf Hitler's character, his relationship to the Jew perceived as the "evil father," the German defeat in 1918, unemployment, inflation, the religious roots of anti-Semitism, the role of Jews in society, the image of the Jew, the indoctrination of German youth, the seduction of the whole German nation by the "charming rapist" Hitler, the Jewish spirit seen as the absolute opposite of the German spirit, and so forth. All these psychoanalytical, sociological, economic, religious, etc. explications, taken alone or together, are both true and false, which is to say, totally inadequate. If they were the necessary precondition for extermination, they were not a sufficient condition. The destruction of Europe's Jews cannot be logically deduced from any such system of presuppositions. Between the conditions that permitted extermination and the extermination itself—the *fact* of the extermination—there is a break in continuity, a hiatus, an abyss. The extermination was not "generated" and to wish to account for it thus is, in a way, to deny its reality, to shut one's eyes to the outbreak of violence; it is to wish to clothe the implacable nakedness of the violence, to disguise it and thereby refuse to confront it in all its bleak singularity. In a word, to weaken it. All discourse that speaks about the "engendering" of violence is an absurd dream of the nonviolent.

One must start with the naked violence and not, as is usually done, with the bonfires, the singing, and the blond heads of the Hitler Jugend; not even with the fanaticized German masses, the shouts of "Heil Hitler!"—the millions of raised arms; nor from the series of anti-Jewish laws that, beginning in 1933, gradually made life for German Jews impossible. Nor from the *Kristallnacht*. The chronological account that would begin with the boycott in April 1933 and culminate naturally in the gas chambers of Auschwitz or Treblinka would not be false, strictly speaking, but it would be miserably shallow and one-dimensional. No, in creating a work of art, one deals with another logic, another way of telling the story. For example, if one wants the spectator to be moved by the scandalous Evian conference, the conference must not appear in the film where chronologically it belongs in the twelve-year-long history of Nazism. One should begin with the ending, with the night of December 7, 1941, in the forest of Ruszow, when the nine hundred Jews of the little town of Kolo, in the District of Konin (northwest of Łódź), had the privilege of being the first to be gassed in the Final Solution. In my film, the Final Solution could not be the culmination of the story, it

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would be its point of departure. The full impact of the Evian scandal will not be felt unless the gas trucks are already in action and the spectator has been gripped by the mind-boggling acceleration of history: between Evian and the first gassing of the Jews of Wartheland *only three years* passed.

The flowery rhetoric of Latin-American delegates at the conference, the customary hypocrisy of the British and American representatives become murderous only when juxtaposed with the reality of extermination, extermination in the process of being carried out. For there to be tragedy, the end must be known. Death must be present at the very outset of the story, it must mark every episode, be the sole measure of the words, silences, actions, refusals to act, and the blindness that made that death possible. Because a chronological account is no more than a succession of befores and afters, it is essentially anti-tragic, and when death comes, it always does so in its own good time, which is to say that it is nonviolent and nonshocking. The six million massacred Jews did not die in their own good time and that is why any work that today intends to do the Holocaust justice must, as a matter of principle, break with chronology. The suspense of the investigation itself—the difficulties and risks it entailed, which are an integral part of the film—will be intensified by yet another suspense that I have called "historic" and that will invariably arise from the juxtaposition of the exact moment of extermination with an incident, remote in time or space, in which a person desperately in need of help at that moment is denied it.

One does not kill legends by opposing them with memories but by confronting them, if possible, in the inconceivable "present" in which they originated. The only way to do this is to resuscitate the past and make it present, invest it with a timeless immediacy. The Holocaust today is legendary on several scores and has attained the dimensions of a mythical tale: knowledge of the unknowable, fuzzy, vague, stereotyped. As happens with all myths, increasing numbers of intelligent people who are not always necessarily ill-intentioned ask themselves whether, after all, these things really happened. If it is possible nowadays to write books on "the myth of the six million" or "the lie of Auschwitz," it is because the entire reality of the Holocaust is dissolving both in the reaches of time, and in the stereotypical recoining of a myth where truth has never really been communicated. The essence of myth—the knowing of the unknowable, the unknowing of the knowable—is its capacity for infinite adaptation, its susceptibility to distortion, and once distortion has occurred its resistance to efforts to reestablish reality; myth is more stubborn than facts. How stale, how trivial the *memories* of survivors appear when compared with the nebulous inflexibility of myth!

This is the reason, then, why a film on the Holocaust has to set out from the principle of the rejection of memory, the refusal to commemorate. The worst moral and artistic crime that can be committed in producing a work dedicated to the Holocaust is to consider the Holocaust as past. Either the Holocaust is legend or it is present; in no case is it a memory. A film devoted to the Holocaust can be only a counter-myth. It can only be an investigation into the present of the Holocaust or at least into a past whose scars are still so freshly and vividly inscribed in certain places and in the consciences of some people that it reveals itself in a hallucinating timelessness. □

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Gerald Cavanaugh

The Corruptions of Science

That science can serve as a "front" for sinister interests and that science can play the whore are shocking statements, doubly so in this time of the apotheosis of Albert Einstein. Yet citizens of a liberal democracy, in which many important social decisions are made on the basis of "scientific" reports, ought to be aware of the extent to which those statements are true. Here are some examples.

In 1971, the noted ecologist Barry Commoner wrote: "No one has argued, to my knowledge, that the recent advent of pollutants on the earth is the result of some natural change independent of man. . . . Environmental deterioration must be due to some fault in the human activities on the earth."[1]

In 1978, however, the Dow Chemical Company advanced precisely the argument Commoner thought impossible. It announced that the presence of the extremely toxic chemical dioxin (TCCD) in the environment downstream from its plant at Midland, Michigan, was attributable not to the plant's production of the herbicide Agent Orange but to "natural causes," that is, "normal combustion processes that occur everywhere." The director of scientific research for Dow's Michigan Division was quoted as saying, "We now think dioxins have been with us [as trace chemicals] since the advent of fire."

The research report submitted by Dow scientists to substantiate this conclusion generated both support and doubt among the experts. The Environmental Protection Agency, however, did not accept Dow's explanation. A report in *Chemical and Engineering News* notes that "in its preliminary evaluation of Dow's claim, EPA says that Dow has submitted no information other than purely circumstantial evidence to support its premise. Further, the agency is critical of the analytical techniques Dow used to determine dioxin levels in the environment." In this controversy Dow was apparently attempting to establish that, as one of the company's scientists put it, "because dioxins are ubiquitous, we need not be concerned about them." However, the EPA's basic position on dioxin-contaminated pesticides remains unchanged: "They pose a threat to human health."[2] Dow and EPA scientists plan to meet soon to clarify what their respective studies mean, and there the matter sits while an extremely toxic substance accumulates in our environment.

What has this to do with "science and the citizen"? We all know that modern society depends upon science. Most of us share the prevalent "scientific" world view, and we all enjoy the benefits of our technological society. What most of us tend to forget is that "science" is a neutral instrument, usable by any human agency for its own purposes. In a splendidly mixed metaphor Winston Churchill warned us about that "neutral" aspect of science 40 years ago, as the scientifically based, technologically advanced Nazi war machine rained bombs upon England: "If we do not stand up to Hitler then the world will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of a perverted science." Churchill was mistaken about "perverted" science—only humans, not their tools, can be perverse, and a definition of "perversion" is beyond science.

Most of us tend also to forget that scientists are mere mortals. We assume, rightly or wrongly, that lawyers and social scientists are

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"subjective" and "ideological," but who ever spearks of "adversarial science" or "Marxist mathematics"? When we hear the word "scientist," images of Einstein, Newton, Pasteur rise in our minds; we see *men* (Madame Curie is the exception that proves the rule), usually in white coats (Madison Avenue has appropriated this vision), before whose authority and power we become as children[3] But scientists are indeed only human, subject, that is, to all human passions, failings, and temptations; they are also only workers, subject to the imperatives of impersonal market and bureaucratic organizations. That is, on the job they do as they are told.

Citizens in a liberal democracy must pay particular regard to these matters. Scientists themselves, as Philip Siekevitz of the Rockefeller Institute recently put it, are not above "the prostitution of [science's] procedures and goals and aims."[4] The danger here does not come so much from government itself. It is true that authoritarian regimes have always prostituted "science" to consolidate their power and further their ends. Liberal-democratic governments, however, operating in a relatively open society, are usually unable egregiously to abuse the scientific instrument; the recent decision by the EPA to ban the pesticide dieldrin as carcinogenic is an example. In contrast, scientists in Britain, where the pesticide was not banned, observed:

> One can speculate on the extent to which the "briefs" of the respective agencies influenced their adoption of an "appropriate" scientific framework. As cancer researchers could not (and still cannot) provide unequivocal guidance, decision-makers must make their own judgments, which inevitably will be shaped by the political and economic context in which they are made. In the U.S. the dieldrin decision was taken by a new, open, and highly visible agency established (in part) to overcome the uncomfortably close identity of interest between the Department of Agriculture and the agricultural industry. By contrast, in the U.K. the decision was made by the committee administering PSPS, a comparatively closed and little-known scheme whose parent department, MAFF, has close relations with industrial and agricultural interests. Perhaps it is not surprising that different decisions were reached.[5]

The most common governmental abuses of science occur when agency and commission experts develop too close professional and personal relationships with the commercial and industrial entities they are supposed to be evaluating. This distortion of assigned functions is perhaps most apparent in the history of the AEC-ERDA relationship to the nuclear power industry.

Given America's relatively open decision-making process, science often has been appropriated by powerful special interests and used for the narrow purpose of profit maximization, to protect a corporate image, or to confuse rather than clarify issues whose resolution requires the unprejudiced interpretation of scientific data.

This is not a new development. Andrew Ure wrote in 1835 that "when capitalism enlists science into her service, the refractory hand of labor will always be taught docility." By that time, Karl Marx had written, "science had been taken onto the payroll."[6] Today the name of science is often invoked by narrow special interests as a cover, a distraction, or an evasion tactic. In 1972 Dow Chemical scientists, finding that one of the company's herbicides, 2,4-D, caused congenital malformation of the fetuses of laboratory rats, in other words, was "teratogenic," simply redefined teratogenesis in such a way as to exclude from that definition the abnormalities their herbicide caused. Writing in *Science*, the commentator on this "scientific" exercise observed —

> Although there might be a scientific case to be made for tightening up the definition of teratogenesis, this is not the reason for the Dow scientists' attempt to refashion the English language. Public relations is the motive. . . . Redefining words to suit the convenience of a special interest group can have untoward consequences—George Orwell wrote a book about them.[7]

More evidence has recently emerged that shows how special interests can control and

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manipulate supposed "objective" scientific studies. Last January, six scientists resigned from the "Council for Agricultural Science and Technology" (CAST). The scientists had been recruited by CAST to help a task force produce a report on the use of antibiotics in animal feed. In their resignations, they charged that the preliminary summary report of the task force misrepresented their own findings and changed the whole tone of their conclusions. One of the six scientists felt that the main purpose of the Council, which acts as an advisory group on agriculture, was to get the task force to produce "a document that would be used to directly counter" a proposal by the Food and Drug Administration to ban the use of antibiotics in animal feed. He also noted that the council task force was almost entirely supported by industry, "especially the pharmaceutical industry," and he added that the 25-member task force was "heavily stacked (about 3 to 1) in favor of the industry position."

CAST, it turns out, has published and distributed over 70 task-force reports in the last seven years. Most of them "have tended to deemphasize the possible dangers involved in agricultural practices." Moreover, the Council receives substantial funding support from agricultural trade associations and from fertilizer, pesticide, and drug manufacturers, including American Cyanamid, Dow Chemical, Mobil Chemical, and Stauffer Chemical.[8]

Similarly, recent bitter experience has taught federal agencies such as the FDA to promulgate regulations that scientists have criticized because they "state what is obvious to any well-trained scientist or research-administrator." The FDA, however, learned in 1977 that it could no longer assume good faith compliance with basic scientific requirements. Almost by accident, the agency uncovered "*evidence of massive deficiencies in scientific data that were crucial for the approval of hundreds of chemicals and drugs now used in the United States*" (emphasis added). Ernest Brisson, the FDA's associate director for compliance, reported "that the scientific integrity of some individuals and establishments engaged in research is open to question." More bluntly he added: "*Any way a laboratory can save a buck, it will attempt to do it, and sometimes at the consumer's expense*" (emphasis added). His criticism was directed at some of the largest independent testing laboratories and at their corporate clients who routinely pressured them for quick and favorable results.[9]

A "front" has been defined as "a group serving under the guise of a fair-seeming activity to gain favorable publicity or as a public representative of a pressure group, for the end of deluding the public." Perhaps the crucial factor, however, is that many scientists adhere to the high standards of their "communitas," the ideals of the scientific community that impel them to work, in Philip Siekevitz's words, "out of a sense of curiosity, excitement, and simply for scientific knowledge." We should be aware, however, that most of our university-trained scientists are employed by major industries. Inevitably, the workplace imperatives affect these scientists and their conception of what scientific research entails. The journal *New Scientist* recently published a cartoon illustrating these imperatives. An industrialist interviewing a newly hired scientist says, "We want you to do some pure disinterested fundamental research into something immensely profitable." As one commentator put it recently:

> . . . Times change and research is not what it was. Research is now an industry and the scientist is one of the workers. The people and the projects in this trade are equally legion and obscure. By the laws of supply and demand our wages are dropping and our status falls with them.[10]

The successful experience of Bell Labs and of the Hoffman-La Roche Institute for Molecular Biology indicates that it is not impossible for a profit-making private concern to support basic research without regard to immediate market considerations. But such centers are bright exceptions to the general rule of market-oriented research.[11] This situation helps explain the often tense relations that develop between university-based scientists and their counterparts in industry.

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Among scientists there is a reluctance to admit the possibility that "scientific objectivity" can be impaired by so mundane a consideration as who pays one's salary. *Science*, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, reported recently that the chemical industry has created a new research arm, the Chemical Industry Institute of Toxicology (CIIT). The purpose of the CIIT is "to do research on non-proprietary 'commodity chemicals' . . . in the face of growing regulatory pressures." The Institute is located in the Research Triangle Park, near Chapel Hill, North Carolina. CIIT scientists keep in close touch with government-agency toxicologists (for instance, at the EPA) and several of them hold adjunct professorships at nearby universities. The head of CIIT is quoted as saying, "I don't think that there is anywhere else such a concentration of toxicologists."[12]

The usually perspicacious editors of *Science* in this case evidently saw nothing to ponder concerning the motive for establishing CIIT ("regulatory pressures") or the well-defined scope of its research ("non-proprietary commodity chemicals"). Nor did they hint that scientists doing research on chemical toxicity might have their perceptions altered or their priorities affected by the fact that they draw their salaries and take their assignments from the chemical industry.

The matter of toxic chemicals has a particular immediacy for all citizens. Donald Kennedy, the former U.S. Commissioner on Food and Drugs, recently stated that

> The magnitude of the effort we are now expending in dealing with the aftermath of the revolution in synthetic organic chemistry is a good example. We have a toxic-chemicals problem of terrible magnitude, and we must now train armies of toxicologists and analytical chemists to deal with the essentially unregulated outcome of our entrancement with that chemistry. [*New York Times*, January 1, 1979.]

Under the circumstances, citizens may well conclude that any results drawn from CIIT research will have to be double-checked by other, differently motivated agencies.

Such a conclusion is reinforced when we recall the remarks made in 1972 by Samuel S. Epstein, a professor of environmental health at Case Western Reserve University: "Anyone can buy the data to support his case." Epstein's observation was offered before the Select (Senate) Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs. The committee was then investigating the problem of food additives, in particular, monosodium glutamate (MSG). At the request of the committee the National Academy of Sciences had assembled an MSG panel composed of seven scientists. The panel duly turned in a report that "confirmed the high degree of safety" of the additives. Only later did the initially incredulous senators discover that five of the seven scientists on the panel had close financial or professional ties with the food industry; indeed, one of the five later testified before the committee as an expert for one of the food industry's lobbying organizations. Such chutzpah led Senator Percy to exclaim: "Here is the same person acting as judge and jury. Regardless of his objectivity [sic!] and competence, it appears there is a conflict of interest here. Aren't there enough scientists in the United States so we can select a panel that would be above reproach?"[13]

Although the senator promised to hold hearings on this subject and although the National Academy of Sciences instituted some reforms in its panel-selection process, neither the public nor the senators, for that matter, have any assurances that such panels will be above reproach.

The lesson seems hard to learn. Energy legislation passed last September requires the Department of Energy to supervise states' efforts to conserve electric power and encourage solar energy use. In November the DOE turned the development of that program over to an engineering firm that is, in Steven Ferrey's words,

> knee-deep in both electric utilities and nuclear power. . . . In 1977, two of [the firm's] wholly owned subsidiaries received $94 million worth of consulting fees from the very utilities whose interests are affected by this program. . . . It all

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adds up to appointing the wolf to guard the sheep.[14]

Every major industry in the country financially supports and is, in effect, represented by some sort of organization with "scientific credentials." Utilities have their Electric Power Research Institute. Cigarette companies have their Tobacco Institute. Manufacturers have, among other groups, the American Industrial Health Council, designed "to combat stiff new rules proposed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to govern carcinogens."[15] Oil and chemical companies have the American Petroleum Institute, whose most recent accomplishment was to persuade the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans to overturn OSHA's workplace exposure limit for benzene, a chemical that has been linked to leukemia in industrial workers. The legal issue in that case concerns "reasonably necessary and appropriate" health standards but the API argued on "scientific" grounds that "no one has been able to show any cancer hazard from benzene exposure below 100 parts per million." OSHA contends, however, that there is no scientific method of determining a safe level of human exposure to carcinogens such as benzene. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals is an industry favorite. In one recent court battle over OSHA chemical spill guidelines, the presiding judge expressed his knowledge of such regulations and, to prove it, held up his pesticide applicator registration card. The legal, as opposed to "scientific," weapons available to industry are quite another story.[16]

Drawing attention to these institutes and their stated objectives is by no means to impute venality, corruption, or deceit to scientists. The problem is much more complex and rooted in the bureaucratic, narrowly defined, highly specialized, and alienating nature of a modern society's working conditions. Such a context strongly influences one's outlook on the world. Science itself has taught us that our perceptions of "reality" are highly selective, often unconscious, and commonly guided by what we wish to perceive.

It is clear to scientists themselves that their profession is undergoing inordinate stress. The late Dr. Cyril Comar, whose career encompassed both university and corporate scientific research, noted the deplorable situation:

> Professional procedures are being bypassed because of the needs of the times. The traditional outlet for scientific reporting is often short-circuited. Scientific work appears in unrefereed reports, news statements, hearing records, symposium transcripts, speeches, and independently published documents. Even editorial reviews are tending to become less critical to avoid any appearance of suppression of controversial findings. Also, much experimental work is becoming extremely difficult to confirm or refute—it may be large-scale, involve sophisticated techniques of experimentation and analysis, and be heavily computerized so that the original data are hard to obtain or the procedures difficult to check. In addition, political and regulatory pressures created by public concern often cannot await the inherently slow pace of scientific tradition.[17]

What is to be done about this state of affairs? The scientist's answer may strike the layman as a counsel of despair: "Perhaps the solution lies in greatly increased efforts of individual scientists—to vigorously take initiative and responsibility, to immediately expose bad science whenever it occurs, and thereby to re-establish credibility."[18] Such a proposal underrates the nonscientific imperatives that affect all scientists but especially those who work under the pressures of "productivity" and profit maximization.

Among other steps, it would be appropriate for our society to increase its support of "basic research" in the universities so as to relieve scientists of anxiety concerning their employment and to free them from the blandishments and complications of corporate grants. Government-supported science can, of course, result in conflicts of interest since researchers so supported may find it difficult to criticize government programs. This is a chronic problem of which, however, people

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are generally aware. Scientists have already called for the establishment of an independent institute to serve as a "watchdog" of government projects and programs. Such an institute would be appropriate, it being axiomatic that *all* situations combining people and power require watchdogs. In any case, a private organization, the National Commission on Research, now exists to "examine the means by which federal support of university research is conducted and propose changes to improve this system."[19]

The commission also aims for the establishment of a system of federally supported scientific education designed to produce specialists willing to devote themselves to public service as a life-long career. Something modeled on the lines of the French Polytechnical Institute, which trains career civil-service scientists, might be considered. Such scientists, devoted to the public interest, would provide a "countervailing power" for the public in the arena of scientific debate over vital social interests.

Some have also advocated the establishment of a "Science Court" that would be "modeled on the judicial procedure for proceeding in the presence of scientific controversy." But the concept has been severely criticized, and on strong grounds, it seems to me. One physicist, Earl Callen, foresees the possibility that such a "science court will establish once and for all that the sun revolves around the earth."[20]

All this again raises the question, what has this to do with the citizens of a liberal democracy? The fact that science is an instrument that can serve many causes, and that scientists are subject to all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, is no cause for laymen to disparage the profession. With all of its imperfections modern science remains the single best tool for dealing with mundane reality. Rather, awareness of its all-too-human deficiencies will allow citizens to understand that science alone can never and ought never to be the sole basis for important social decisions. We will more readily see that powerful economic and political interests most often determine such decisions, using "science" whenever possible as a crutch or a cover.[21]

What is perhaps most necessary is a recognition that the natural and social sciences are theoretical and not practical exercises. That is, they can tell the citizen about probable causes and probable effects but they can tell us little or nothing about means and ends, or what we *should* do. Social decisions inevitably rest upon implicit or explicit values, upon the goals we seek as a society. A social policy that draws upon science but is based upon a democratically formed consensus on, for instance, the belief in the equality and essential humanity of all human beings, may not succeed in attaining desired goals; it will, however, always be something morally justifiable and a source of legitimate pride.

A social policy, on the other hand, based upon "scientific" evidence—evidence, if it is not factitious to begin with, is always subject to refutation[22]—may in fact do irreparable and unjustifiable damage to human beings and can never be morally justified.

In the "value-based" policy, human beings are viewed as ends in themselves; in a "science-based" policy, human beings are viewed as objects to be manipulated to attain ends that are apparent and desirable to some few "masters of the data." To base a public educational policy on the data of Arthur Jensen, for example, whose theory on educability of group differences is described as "neither trivial nor compelling," would be an affront to both science and humanity.[23]

This is by no means to say that agreement on values and morality, agreement on the goals of a society, is easy to achieve or that science can contribute nothing to the resolution of value disputes.[24] It means only that such agreement or consensus is both primary and essential before we can begin to implement, as we should and must, the evidence of science and the tools of technology.

Recognizing the different imperatives stemming from scientific evidence and from moral values does not solve the problem of actively and effectively engaging laymen in decision-

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making. We are still dependent upon the experts, and our task is made no easier when they themselves differ sharply. George Wald's suggestion that when equally qualified scientists differ one opts for the position of those scientists with no vested interests at stake is wise but of limited application. Issues and positions are rarely unambiguous. Perhaps the central point is to insure that information of all sorts, not merely "expert" information, is considered before any policy is decided upon and implemented.

For it bears repeating that implementation with citizens' participation and final authority is both necessary and beneficial. It is also quite feasible, as the results of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline (Berger) Inquiry show. That inquiry into the social, economic, and environmental impact of a massive pipeline complex was conducted with citizen participation that increased as the inquiry proceeded. The results were heartening:

> The Berger Inquiry's methodology reveals the extent to which information is the key element of an assessment process. Its developers recognized the fact that the group that controls the information, controls all else, and that the control of information should not rest exclusively with experts. Indeed it demonstrates that the obligation of the expert in industry and government is to expose, at a very early stage, the whole range of issues to the "expert" scrutiny of all citizens. The citizens' input has now been shown to be essential to an assessment process.[25]

At the very least, laymen will seek in this process to be as critical and analytical as scientists ideally are. "Risk-benefit analysis," for example, will be utilized, but never in secrecy and at the expense of citizen participation; nor will such analyses be used fallaciously and illegitimately, that is, outside the closed systems they are solely designed for.[26] We will also not be embarrassed to admit that feelings, emotions, and values enter into public deliberations, as they in fact play a part in purely "scientific" inquiries. Under such circumstances, science remains necessary but not sufficient, and laymen-citizen responsibility, in effective institutional form, regains a primary position.

Notes

[1] Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), p. 122.

[2] See, for this material, R. Jeffrey Smith, "Dioxins Have Been Present Since the Advent of Fire, Says Dow," *Science*, December 15, 1978, pp. 1166-67, and *Chemical and Engineering News*, February 12, 1979, pp. 23-29, February 26, 1979, p. 6. See also the acute commentary in the *New Yorker*, December 18, 1978, pp. 27-28. I am grateful to Chandra Mutha for directing me to the material in *Chemical and Engineering News*.

[3] In his review of Stanley Milgrim's book, *Obedience to Authority* (1974), Steven Marcus acutely observes that "Milgrim's book . . . is really about the authority of Science rather than about authority in general," *New York Times Book Review*, January 13, 1974, p. 3.

[4] Letter, *Science*, November 10, 1978, p. 547.

[5] Bendan Gillespie, Dave Ena, and Ron Johnson, "A Tale of Two Pesticides," *New Scientist*, February 9, 1978, pp. 350-52.

[6] Both quotations are in Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 564.

[7] "Dow Redefines Word It Doesn't Like," *Science*, April 21, 1972, p. 261.

[8] *New York Times*, January 23, 1979, sec. C, p. 2.

[9] See R. Jeffrey Smith, "Creative Penmanship in Animal Testing Prompts FDA Controls," *Science*, December 23, 1977, pp. 1227-29.

[10] Richard Reeves, *New Scientist*, March 2, 1978, p. 608. The cartoon appeared in the February 17, 1977 issue, p. 379.

[11] On the Roche Institute of Molecular Biology, see D. S. Greenberg, "Molecular Biology: Drug Firm to Establish New Research Center," *Science*, July 28, 1967, pp. 408-409. The U.S. Naval Laboratories of the Washington, D.C. area attempt to recruit researchers with the slogan, "Some organizations won't support an R and D program unless there's an immedite payoff. We're different." See *Science*, March 24, 1967, inside back cover.

[12] Luther J. Carter, "Research Triangle Park Succeeds Beyond Its Promoter's Expectations," *Science*, June 30, 1978, pp. 1469-70.

[13] "Academy Food Committees: New Criticism of Industry Ties," *Science*, September 29, 1972, pp. 1172-75. See also *Science*, February 11, 1977, pp. 556-58 for discussion of another case in which the NSF was charged with failing to require policy papers "to meet even the most basic test of independence, objectivity, and merit." See David Kotelchuck, "Asbestos—Science for Sale," *Science For the People*, September 1975, pp.

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8-16. (I owe this reference to Professor Charles Schwartz of U. C., Berkeley.)

[14] See Steven Ferrey, "Solar Eclipse: Our Bungled Energy Policy," *Saturday Review*, March 3, 1979, pp. 24-26.

[15] *Science*, November 10, 1978, p. 602.

[16] See "High Court to Review OSHA Benzene Rule," *Chemical and Engineering News*, February 26, 1979, pp. 7-8; and R. Jeffrey Smith, "Toxic Substances: EPA and OSHA are Reluctant Regulators," *Science*, January 5, 1979, pp. 28-32. The EPA, for example, is often blamed for not issuing regulations to control the hazardous wastes that constitute the largest single threat to environmental health and safety. But the necessary regulations have been blocked because chemical industry lawyers have filed more than 1,200 "comments" the EPA must by law consider and answer. The "bureaucrats" are thus blamed for industry's catastrophes. (*San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*, October 14, 1979, sec. A, pp. 1, 16, has a detailed review of this toxic waste problem.)

[17] It would be unfair to scientists to impute to them higher than ordinary moral capabilities and political courage. They are only human. See, for example, Alan D. Beyerchen, *Scientists Under Hitler: Politics and the Physics Community in the Third Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). Lest we dismiss this as a "German" phenomenon, we should recall the herdlike obedience of most academicians at the University of California during the "loyalty oath" struggle in 1950.

[18] See Dr. Cyril Comar's statement, "Bad Science and Social Penalties," *Science*, June 16, 1978, p. 1125. William J. McGill has similarly argued that "science" ought not be sullied by legislative, political, or judicial interference, and that scientists themselves ("the best and most responsible members") should be primarily responsible for keeping their house in order. This argument assumes that "science" has not from the beginning been used by nonscientists for nonscientific ends. It is fatuous to believe that an ideal scientific method is sufficient to protect men and women against common human frailties. (McGill's remarks are excerpted in *Science*, October 21, 1977, p. 275.) For a different view of science and society and an effective argument in favor of "the application of knowledge of facts in new compassionate ways," see June Goodfield, "Humanity in Science: A Perspective and a Plea," *Science*, November 11, 1977, pp. 580-85.

[19] See Cornelius J. Pings on the National Commission on Research, in *Science*, May 11, 1979, p. 1158. See also David E. and Abraham M. Lilienfeld on the need for a "watchdog" institute, in *Science*, October 21, 1977, pp. 250-51.

[20] See P. M. Boffey, *The Brain Bank of America* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), and Kenneth R. Hammond and Leonard Adelman, "Science, Values and Human Judgment," *Science*, October 22, 1976, pp. 389-96. The Callen quotation is from his letter on the science court to *Science*, September 10, 1976, pp. 948-51.

[21] See the analysis by Richard D. Lyons, of the recent decision concerning saccharin, "Dissent on Saccharin Report," *New York Times*, March 5, 1979, p. 28.

[22] See Stephen Jay Gould, "Morton's Ranking of Races by Cranial Capacity," *Science*, May 5, 1978, pp. 503-509, where Gould argues that "unconscious manipulating of data may be a scientific norm. . . . The only palliatives I know are vigilance and scrutiny." See also the expose of Cyril Burt's work on I.Q. and social class in which it is shown "beyond reasonable doubt" that Burt fabricated much of his data: D. D. Dorfman, "The Cyril Burt Question: New Findings," *Science*, September 29, 1978, pp. 1177-86.

[23] See the review of Jensen's book by Carten Denniston in *Science*, January 17, 1975, pp. 161-62. In any event, scientists tend to advance merely technical solutions to what are in fact complex social and political problems. For an example of this question-begging approach see R. A. Brightsen, "The Way to Save Nuclear Power," *Fortune*, September 10, 1979, pp. 126-32, esp. p. 132.

[24] Hammond and Adelman, in their article cited in note 20, offer a strong argument that "a scientifically, socially, and ethically defensible means for integrating science and human values can be achieved." The case study they use to illustrate this integration appears to me, however, too narrow an issue and uniquely open to scientific conclusions to sustain their argument.

[25] D. J. Gamble, "The Berger Inquiry: An Impact Assessment Process," *Science*, March 3, 1978, pp. 946-52.

[26] See Fred Hapgood, "Risk-Benefit Analysis: Putting a Price on Life," *Atlantic*, March 1979, pp. 33-38; see also the interesting letter by John Metcalfe in the *New York Times*, April 14, 1979. □

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Henry Pachter

The Ambiguous Legacy of Eduard Bernstein

As much as political parties need a myth, they need heroes whom they can look up to. Although democratic socialism takes pride in being rational, it is no exception. A leader with a human face lends personal warmth to the idea; the image of a founder bestows historical perspective to routine practices. It is not surprising, therefore, that after the eclipse of the popular Willy Brandt and his replacement by the efficient Helmut Schmidt, the German Social-Democratic party (SPD) should have scanned its history in search of an ancestor. Willy Brandt himself would have liked to revive the memory of August Bebel, the venerable co-founder who led the party from 1869 to his death in 1912. But for all his sterling qualities, highly praised even by the cross-grained Marx, Bebel was not a thinker and perhaps too much of a boss; Marx, on the other hand, was out of the question.

So some younger Social Democrats have recently staged a renascence of Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932), the critic of Marxism and father of "revisionism," well remembered by the pre-Hitler generation as "Old Ede Bernstein" and well suited, with his benevolent, bearded physiognomy, to play the role of ancestor.

My purpose here is to find out whether the claims made on behalf of Bernstein are indeed justified. I shall begin by discussing the significance of his "revision," after which I shall review some of the criticism leveled against it.

I must begin with a warning: Bernstein's revisionism of 1900 has almost nothing in common with today's search for a "socialism with a human face"; his opponents on the socialist left were dedicated, no less than he, to democratic and humanist values. They rarely talked about them in theory, because they were too busy fighting for them, and no one in the socialist camp had yet questioned them. They took for granted that socialism proposed to expand the realm of freedom and to realize liberties that liberalism had failed to achieve. Only the enemies of socialism charged that public ownership would mean bureaucratic rule by bosses.

Although Gustave LeBon (1895) and Robert Michels (1911) had attacked the spirit of mass movements, bossism, and the "iron law of organization," Bernstein did not use their arguments, and while he criticized Marx and others, he never criticized the party. On the contrary, he was very much a man of the movement, and he hoped to formulate a theory that fitted the practice of its leaders. He would occasionally warn the workers not to trust their May Day speakers, but he accepted machine rule when its decisions went his way. He declared decentralization a lovely idea, but in practical instances he came out for central organization and strong leadership.

In one respect, Bernstein's efforts aimed at exactly the opposite of what modern revisionists are trying to do. They seek to underpin Marxism with philosophical, anthropological, and psychological "groundings" that would make it into an all-encompassing, universal—in Lukács's and Sartre's language: totalizing—*Weltanschauung*. Bernstein, on the contrary, tried to strip Marxism of all those transcendental claims that are not warranted by empirical findings, and he felt free to treat it as just another branch of social science, subject to periodical revisions.

It is mostly this undogmatic attitude that

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recommends Bernstein to modern socialists, but here again we must add a caveat: whereas the labor movement today needs an ideology, it was Bernstein's aim 70 years ago to de-ideologize labor action. It is true, of course, that his residual Marxism was strong enough to make the socialist goal and even more the socialist attitude matter; and he was far from wishing to convert the labor movement into a mere pressure group. But that precisely was the danger of his revisionism; it preached a sobriety of which we may now have too much. Where we need new sources of inspiration, the socialists around the turn of the century were still feeding on the élan of a movement on the rise.

Bernstein's revisionism fitted the period of the Second International, roughly from the 1880s to 1914, when the proletariat was growing—physically, morally, politically. Along with expanding capitalism, the trade unions were acquiring power, the parties gaining votes in every election. Then Bernstein could foresee that no bloody revolution, perhaps no violence at all was required to conquer power: with the ballot the socialists would gain ascendancy step by step, and through legislation they would transform capitalism into a more humane system.

To do that, however, they needed allies, above all the peasants and the intelligentsia. It was essential not to frighten them away by revolutionary gestures and fanatical programs; a party that wishes to rule must not tie its hands with ideological fetters, especially if the ideology in question is as obsolete as Marxism. Socialist parties should be open to believers of all faiths, their program should receive stimulation from all new developments in the arts and sciences, their tactics should be flexible. What mattered was not righteousness but a progress whose inevitability neither the orthodox nor the revisionists nor anyone else around 1900 ever doubted. The labor movement had been utopian as long as it was immature; now it could afford no longer to reject or deprecate immediate improvements on the ground that they seemed deceptive or puny in the light of the faraway ideal.

In this sense Bernstein spoke the word that made him famous: "*The ultimate goal [Endziel] is nothing to me; the Movement is everything.*" In his main work, *Evolutionary Socialism*, he later qualified this to say that obviously the movement must have a direction, but that goals would develop apace with the movement's progress. Strangely, he shared this way of thinking with some on the far left, the French syndicalists and Rosa Luxemburg, not his allies in any other respect. They, too, thought of revolution as an ongoing process, a movement rather than a unique event, and like Bernstein, they felt that the power of the movement mattered more than the form of government under which it was progressing. I shall return, at the end of this essay, to the relevance of this idea. Here I begin with a review of Bernstein's life.

"A Life for Socialism"

EDUARD BERNSTEIN was born in 1850, the son of a Jewish engine driver in Berlin. His father sent him to high school—then unusual for workers—but he left at the age of 14 with the certificate enabling middle-class boys to cut their military service from three years to one. He was apprenticed to a banker, but his interest in socialism was awakened early. Originally he was attracted to the ideas of Lassalle rather than to those of Marx, but having found Lassalle's disciples sectarian, he joined the Marxist-populist Social-Democratic Workers' party. This preference for movement over ideology foreshadowed his later views. In 1875 he took part in the Gotha congress where the two German workers' parties merged, forming the SPD (Social-Democratic party of Germany).

Persecuted under Bismarck's antisocialist law, Bernstein fled to Zurich where one Karl Höchberg, a rich well-meaning philanthropist, sponsored a weekly paper, *Der Sozialdemokrat*, which was smuggled across the border. Since socialists in Germany found it difficult to communicate with each other, the exile paper was soon the most important link between them. It became the party's official organ. Höchberg picked Bernstein to be

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editor—did he sense even then that Bernstein was at heart a moderate? Marx and Engels were suspicious of both men; but Bernstein acquitted himself with skill, and when he paid the masters a visit in London, he won their confidence. In 1888 the paper was transferred to London, and there Bernstein became so intimate with Engels that the latter appointed him and Karl Kautsky (the high priest of orthodox Marxism) executors of his will. Bernstein justified this confidence by publishing a series of *Dokumente des Sozialismus* (among which was part of *The German Ideology*).

The SPD became legal again in 1890, but Bernstein was still under indictment in Prussia and could not leave England until 1901. He used his long sojourn to study the 17th-century revolution and wrote a remarkable book on the radical Puritans, which Max Weber recognized as a major contribution, in fact as an anticipation of his own studies on the affinity between capitalism and Puritanism. In London Bernstein met George Bernard Shaw and attended meetings of the Fabian Society. He watched the success of the "piecemeal revolution" they were advocating; he admired the civility of their discussions, so different from the German manner; he was impressed by the gradual expansion of the public sphere in the supply of basic services and by the growth of democratic rights in industrial relations. In his book *Zur Geschichte und Theorie des Sozialismus* (1901) he repeated the term "piecemeal socialism" but later on denied that the Fabians had been decisive in his intellectual development. He may have been right. Fabian socialism was not a popular movement but addressed itself to civil servants and other well-meaning members of the managing class. Bernstein, by contrast, was genuinely attached to the daily reality of trade union activities, the practice of class struggle rather than technocratic planning.

Although Bernstein had discussed Fabianism with Engels, its full significance may have become clear to him only later; perhaps he also did not wish to sadden the old friend and mentor. So he waited until Engels died in 1895; but within less than a year thereafter he began to publish articles in which he attacked Marxist philosophy and the theory of revolution. An English translation (by Edith Harvey, New York: Schocken, 1961) appeared under the title *Evolutionary Socialism.* *

Bernstein was hardly the first to point out discrepancies between Marx's predictions and the development of capitalism; nor were all his points well taken. He overestimated the significance of the survival of small business and paid too little attention to significant changes in the structure of capitalism—the emergence of big business and monopolistic organizations, the collaboration of banking, industry, and government, the revival of the colonial drive—which were commented upon by writers in Kautsky's theoretical weekly, *Die Neue Zeit*, and elsewhere. On the other hand, he clearly saw that basic changes had occurred in the operating conditions of the labor movement and in the forms of its activity. Nor did he alone make these observations. Sidney and Beatrice Webb had just published *Industrial Democracy* (the classic that Lenin translated and then quoted to show that by themselves workers can develop only a "trade union consciousness").

Certainly, Bernstein did not claim he was offering a new theory. He merely presented his observations on the practice of politics and trade union action. To his surprise, however, the union leaders were not interested in being vindicated; they had no use for "revisionist" or any other "theory." The militants were annoyed with the "quarrels of intellectuals," which they feared might weaken the movement, and the party was in an uproar; sharp refutations were published in the *Neue Zeit* and in various daily papers. Bernstein was censured at the party's congress and would have been expelled, but for his personal friendship with many leaders. Nor did it help his reputation with the workers when he

* Unfortunately this English version is unreliable and often incomprehensible to readers not familiar with the German text. Who, for instance, would guess that "Bismarck's socialist laws" refers to his ban on socialist agitation? Moreover, important chapters have been left out.

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was invited by the University of Berlin to present his views to an academic audience. (He probably was the only person without a high school diploma ever to receive this honor. And 20 years later, when the files were opened, the suspicion was proved justified: the Prussian minister of justice had squashed Bernstein's indictment because it was hoped he would split the SPD.)

Bernstein gave his lecture an ambitiously Kantian title: "How Is Scientific Socialism Possible?" His answer, obviously, had to be that socialism is not a scientific necessity but a moral imperative. In the audience were such liberal-social professors as Lujo Brentano, Werner Sombart, and Gerhard von Schulze-Gaevernitz who were then known derisively as "socialists of the lectern." But these paternalistic advocates of "social policies" were really miles apart from Bernstein. His aim was not to reform capitalism but to transform it; his social policies were not so much for workers as by the workers. What the professors considered a necessary, perhaps healthy adjustment of capitalism was for him merely the first mile on the long road toward a new social order. What they expected to be granted by the government, he saw as the movement's victories. Even in his two historical works on the Chartists and the Puritans, the emphasis had been on self-organization and action by the masses.

Why, then, was the party so shocked by Bernstein's views? Its everyday politics were no longer revolutionary. As Kautsky himself had written: the SPD is a revolutionary party that does not make revolutions. The party expected that somehow.

It would wake up one morning and, behold, the revolution had come (which was to happen in 1918). But in the meantime the party behaved as though infinite progress, step by successive step, was possible under the Kaiser's regime. The party was growing; already it was "the strongest of all parties" (as its hymn asserted); in 1903 it received one-third of all votes, and one day it would receive 51 percent. Yet to make that success a certainty, the party needed the Marxist theory, which assured it that the outcome brooked no doubt, that "ultimately" there would be a fundamental change, that all the suffering and fighting would be rewarded by a day of reckoning and subsequent bliss. For it was still dangerous to walk a picket line, and no man risks his life for mere pennies. He must have a flag, an ultimate goal, an idea, a future, a community to die for. The great mass strikes in most countries were political: not for economic gains, but for civil rights, for the ballot.

Bernstein charged that the party's revolutionary rhetoric was no longer in line with its daily practice—which was precisely what the party did not wish to hear. He proposed to adjust the theory to the real conditions of class conflict—but would not the militants then have lost courage? He promised that a more realistic ideology would attract millions of middle-class voters—but did the proletarians to whom Marx had promised the future want that? Bernstein envisaged a movement of the whole people; but the party's life, its trade union halls, its May Day festivals, its social and cultural clubs were proletarian in speech, in manner, in dress, in habits and outlook.

The Dresden congress (1903) rejected "revisionism" by an overwhelming majority. Significantly, that majority included many who agreed with Bernstein on all practical matters but felt that the party could not abandon the ideology that had made it great. Bernstein's friend Ignaz Auer, who sympathized with his views, observed dryly: "My dear Ede, such things may be done, but one does not brag about them." Bernstein was isolated. Only a small band of intellectuals, parliamentarians, and trade union officials rallied around the revisionist magazine *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, which attracted progressive writers outside the party and dealt intelligently with modern poetry, drama, and the modern novel. Its reviews of contemporary literature and art compare favorably with those of the *Neue Zeit*, which was hopelessly mired in the classical canons Marx had respected a generation ago. Bernstein was a regular contributor until the World War revealed that the party had become much

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more revisionist than he had intended. Especially the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* waxed ultrapatriotic: in the hour of national danger, it argued, "Germany's poorest son is found to be its most faithful."

Bernstein, too, had originally agreed that in a "war against the bloody Czar" no socialist can remain neutral (a judgment with which Marx and Engels would have heartily concurred). Soon he found out, however, that the German war aims were no less execrable than the Czar's and he seceded from both the magazine and, more important, from the parliamentary SPD, which continued to vote for the Kaiser's war appropriations. He was followed by a few ethical socialists; there also were radical war protesters on the left; they all met to form a new party, the Independent Social Democratic party of Germany (USPD). Thus Bernstein was temporarily united with former antagonists, the orthodox Marxists, the old left—Kautsky, Hilferding, Ledebour, Haase—and radicals like Däumig and Liebknecht (who were later to form the Communist party). Although the USPD represented only a minority of the old SPD, it embodied the best of the socialist traditions in Germany: it was revolutionary and pacifist; it had a solid base in the "councils" (*Raete*) that were springing up in the construction and defense industries; it hailed the Russian revolution when it broke out in 1917; it became the driving force in the revolutionary events of 1918-19; it forced the Reichstag to sign the Treaty of Versailles.

Bernstein, however, never felt comfortable in this revolutionary ambiance. In November 1918 he tried to prevent "hasty" socializations that might have disrupted production. Soon after the revolution he rejoined the SPD, yet he also maintained his membership in the USPD. When dual membership was declared inadmissible, he chose the SPD but did not abandon his effort to reconcile the two parties until 1920. Then half the Independents merged with the Communists, while leaders of the old Marxist center (Kautsky, Hilferding) returned to the old party in 1922. Two years later, on the occasion of Kautsky's 70th birthday, Kautsky and Bernstein restored the friendship of their early days in London and proclaimed their total agreement. Forty years later, at a commemorative function, Carlo Schmid was able to state that "Bernstein triumphed throughout."

Returned to the fold, Bernstein was given a seat in the Reichstag and became the party's expert on taxation. More important, as a former Independent he was most useful to the party in arguing with the left: his pamphlets of the period are an apology for the SPD leaders' conduct during the revolution of 1918 and a defense of the parliamentary Republic. His enemies, and in particular the Communists, now were the advocates of the Council system. The Independents had favored the parliamentary Republic in which the Councils would have a legitimate place. Now the labor movement was split into dogmatic advocates of parliamentary government on the one side and equally dogmatic devotees of the Soviet system on the other.

The SPD still gave courses in Marxism to its youth groups, but by the middle '20s it had exchanged class struggle for the defense of the Republic. At the Heidelberg congress in 1925 it adapted its program to the new tendencies of "organized capitalism" and dealt with the new problems of industrial democracy and crisis management. In social legislation, the party still pursued policies along the lines of Bernstein's reform socialism. But the new problems were of a new magnitude and nature he had not foreseen: labor was deeply involved in administrative and economic decision-making; instead of transforming capitalism labor had to "save" it.

In Prussia, which now was the most advanced German state, social democrats were planning and expanding public ownership. Bernstein, who had said that "a good piece of social legislation is worth more than a hundred nationalizations," had fallen behind the development. His powers were waning and his later books are embarrassing. He died in 1932, at a time when history was shattering the liberal-labor ideologies and the pseudo-republican illusions of the SPD. If there was a better way to ward off the Nazi threat then support of Hindenburg, Bernstein did not

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know it. Peter Gay, his biographer, has summarized "the dilemma of democratic socialism" as "between the Charybdis of impotence vis-à-vis the enemy and the Scylla of treason vis-à-vis the cause." Our question must now be, Was this necessarily so? Does a democratic conviction exclude militancy and decisiveness?

Two Views of Revolution

REVISIONISM ESSENTIALLY is the view that progress for social equality and power for the labor movement can be won without violent revolution; that the goals cannot be achieved by a determined minority's actions but needs the support by the majority of the people; that revolution in the social sense (as opposed to "the sense of pitchforks," in Engels's words) must be understood as a long-drawn-out process rather than a single act:

> Socialism will come, or rather is coming, not as the result of a great political showdown but as the result of a series of economic and political victories of the working-class movement in the various fields of its activities; not as a consequence of increasing repression, of misery and humiliations, but as a result of its increasing influence and of the improvements for which it has fought. The socialist society will emerge not from chaos but from an alliance of creative organizations in the field of economics and of creative innovations of militant democracy in the states and communities. In spite of reactionary counterblows I see that class war assumes ever more civilized forms, and this is the best guarantee for the realization of socialism.

This formulation was prepared by Bernstein for the Stuttgart congress of the SPD in 1898 and reprinted in *Was ist Sozialismus?* in 1922. This conception had obviously been modeled on the rise of the middle class, which had grown in the interstices of the feudal society and acquired power under absolutism. Revolution or no revolution, it had achieved a dominant position in all modern countries where it had developed its characteristic economic system and industry. Marxists were convinced that the workers could not rise in the same fashion since they did not own the means of production and had not developed a characteristic economic system. The workers, rather, could come to power only by turning society upside down, not through prosperity but through a general cataclysm. The working class could not advance its principles within the old economy as its partner, rival, and successor; it had to be the midwife of "the new society that had been spawned in the womb of the old"—Marx was extremely fond of this simile he had inherited from Hegel.

Marx retained this grandiose and suggestive vision of an apocalyptic leap: the *social* revolution of the bourgeoisie had been accomplished before it acquired the symbols of political power, but it had to be completed by the *political* act that overthrew the "superstructure" of the feudal state. Strangely, he envisaged this same dialectic for the proletarian revolution, though with this difference: whereas in the bourgeois revolution, the social-economic and cultural changes had *preceded* the seizure of political power, in the proletarian revolution the social-economic and cultural transformation was to *follow* the political seizure of power.

This scheme was no foreign element in Marxism. It was fitting for a weak proletariat and therefore was adopted wholesale by Lenin; but even in an advanced country like Germany, the prophecy of a great cataclysmic revolution, a day of reckoning and renewal, helped to keep the militants' faith burning. As we saw, even "pragmatic" socialist politicians felt that the party needed the fire-and-brimstone rhetoric of a revolutionary purgatory.

Bernstein considered all this an unfortunate heritage of the generation of 1848, when all radicals had looked back to the Jacobins, and German radicals in particular were ensnared in "the tripwires of Hegelian dialectics" (the chapter so entitled is missing in the English version of *Evolutionary Socialism*). Had Marx not been trapped in the triadic schematism that requires the bloody qualitative leap, he might not have been blind to the chances of a more comfortable march into the future. Were not, by his own account in

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Das Kapital, the workers winning daily battles for "the political economy of the proletariat"—such as the ten-hour day, and social security insurance—through trade union and legislative action, wielding ballots rather than bullets? Had not Engels (in the "Preface" to a new edition of Marx's *Class Struggles in France*) pointed out that modern city-planning, modern weapons, and modern police training had made the old tactics of insurrection obsolete? Barricades might still serve as metaphors, and their memory might be celebrated in songs and on canvas. But in the most advanced countries—the Netherlands, England, the United States—Engels had thought it quite conceivable that a parliamentary majority might become the lever of the revolution. In Germany, the SPD had won 1,200,000 votes and the next business slump surely would double this sum; by the end of the century, Engels hoped to see socialism take power through democratic means.

Engels may not have been aware that, by embracing the ballot so enthusiastically, he was renouncing not only violence and dictatorship but also the entire either/or philosophy that pervades Marxist thought from the theory of value to the theory of the state. Marx's idea of revolution foresees a break in time, a sudden change of direction from the day before to the day after. Parliamentary tactics would mean that pieces of socialist legislation could be introduced gradually and that the balance of power may shift from one class to the other over a number of years. Just as the bourgeoisie had been able to use the state for its purposes even before the symbols of power had fallen into its hands, so the workers might acquire influence and power piecemeal while class struggle continued in the arenas of industry, parliament, culture, and law.

If the term "revolution" was to be used at all, it had to be redefined. It no longer meant a military-political action that was to bring about a sudden change of regime. It would have to mean a protracted struggle, over many legislative periods, for the transformation of a private enterprise economy into a mixed system where private and cooperative, municipal and state enterprises might compete but all would undergo a process of democratization. So would all public functions. Class differences would gradually be reduced, eventually to disappear completely. Revolution, therefore, would be a continuous process, not a once-for-all-times surgical intervention. To return once more to Marx's favorite simile—socialism is not brought into the world by caesarian section.

THESE DEVELOPMENTS gave Ferdinand Lassalle, the meteoric initiator of German socialism, a posthumous victory over Marx. In his *Critique of the Gotha Program* Marx had denied that the workers can "take over" the old state machinery. Lassalle, by contrast, had taught that once the workers had won the ballot, they would enlist the state's services in their fight against the liberal bourgeoisie. Lassalle did not mind allying himself with Bismarck for his purposes. In the united party, Marxist theory was still mouthed on solemn occasions but in practical, everyday dealings this staunch Puritanism was an impediment rather than a help; it was able to justify class war but not to direct it. Socialist congresses, therefore, were filled with curious debates about the relationship between socialist conscience and the need to win votes: Should socialists agitate for farm loans when Marx had predicted the doom of the family farm? How was one to attract middle-class voters when the program condemned them to be "ground down" between the historical millstones of Capital and Labor? Was it permissible for the party paper in a small principality to mourn the demise of the local sovereign? Should Social Democrats at the end of a traditional Reichstag session, when the Speaker brought out the customary "Hurrah for the Kaiser" rise politely but silently? Or sullenly remain seated? Or walk out defiantly? Might the party paper serialize Zola's *Germinal* with its unflattering portraits of sturdy proletarians? Should socialists support the "petty bourgeois" cause of Captain Dreyfus?

In all these matters, practical measures of progress required acquiescence in the symbolism of the old regime, which offended the

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ethics and esthetics of proletarian class consciousness; but a school of "pragmatists" among the labor leaders was quite prepared to sacrifice ideology for real increases in power.

Meanwhile, similar developments had spread "reformism" in other parties of the International. Turati formed the Italian socialist party and expelled the revolutionary syndicalists. In France, the *Parti Ouvrier*, led by Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue wrote in its program: "The suffrage has been transformed, from a means of deception, which it once was, into a means of emancipation" (the relative clause is there to appease the ghost of Marx). Certainly, in absolutist or semifeudal countries, the state machinery had to be broken before any democratic development could be expected. It is also true that even in the West, socialist workers still thought of the revolution as "the day" (one of Kautsky's works was entitled: *On the Day After the Revolution*). But in their daily practice the mass parties concentrated on electoral policies and social legislation; under the more liberal constitutions of the South German states they occasionally provided the necessary votes to form a majority, and even orthodox Marxists were no longer suspicious of social reform. Rosa Luxemburg began her pamphlet *Social Reform or Revolution*, an eloquent polemic against Bernstein, by stating that these two terms ought not to be alternatives. Social democracy before World War I was Marxist in name, but its actions were hardly guided by its program. When Bernstein proposed to purge Marxism of its Hegelian and Blanquist heritage, he meant to be doing nothing more than bring the theory into harmony with the practice.

Revisions and Revisionism

NOW TO A BRIEF ANALYSIS of *Evolutionary Socialism*, the work for which Bernstein is known. This is not easy, because Bernstein was not a systematic thinker. He was an able journalist who could handle facts and statistics well enough, but he was uncomfortable with ideas and often mistook "for instance" for an argument. His exposition also was warped by his ambivalent position vis-à-vis the fathers of the movement. Their orthodox disciples occupied the theoretical terrain, and instead of developing his own program, Bernstein had to present his views as deviations from established doctrine, sometimes exaggerating minor differences. Whatever Marx may have "really meant," the Marxism Bernstein knew was that of the late Engels and of Karl Kautsky, a Marxism that claimed to be "science" in the strict, deterministic sense of 19th-century materialism. Its function for the labor movement was to make its victory appear inevitable, as if it were a law of nature. Although Engels, too, had rejected the idea that anything "followed" from the dialectic (for instance, in *Anti-Dühring*), it was Bernstein who asked, Why then talk about dialectics at all? And Marx's famous law of value seemed to him sheer metaphysics: "That the worker never gets the full product of his labor is an empirical fact that does not need any deductive proof. Whether the Marxist theory of value is correct or not is quite immaterial to the proof of surplus labor." (*Evolutionary Socialism*, p. 35.)

Marx's propensity toward abstractions, however, had led him away from empirical reality. Predictions he had based on his alleged "laws" had failed to materialize. Bernstein noted in his diary: "Peasants don't sink, the middle class refuses to disappear, crises do not become ever more severe, nor do misery and slavery increase." Capitalism was not anywhere near the point of collapse, which Engels had set for the turn of the century. It was prospering. Instead of becoming more polarized, the class differences were becoming more finely shaded. Instead of hurrying toward its doom, capitalism was developing tools to handle crisis management and organization—through cartels, credit facilities, farm support, social policies. The middle class did not disappear; on the contrary, its expanding ranks gave strength to the economic structure and cushioned the business cycle.

Workers now found opportunities to rise or to find accommodations with the system, and socialists therefore found it more difficult to preach the total break that is revolution. A word often used (though not by Bernstein

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himself) spoke of the possibility of organic transformation (*Hineinwachsen*), where it was not quite clear whether capitalism was imperceptibly "changing into" some sort of welfare state or the workers were acclimatizing to capitalism. In either case, the conditions of class struggle had been changed decisively since the *Communist Manifesto*, which still was the basis and source of the theoretical part of the program the SPD had adopted at Erfurt in 1891.

Bernstein himself had written the second, practical part of that program, with demands ranging from a universal, equal, and secret ballot to progressive income tax and "free burial"—none of which was as explosive or "transcendent" as the famous "ten demands" at the end of the *Communist Manifesto*.

Bernstein's work *Evolutionary Socialism* is really about this discrepancy. In its first part it summarizes the essential tenets of Marxism; in its second part it shows that these no longer apply in the modern world; in its third part it speaks of socialist actions in this real world, and especially of its three main thrusts: trade unionism, cooperative enterprise, parliamentary process. This last is presented with great eloquence:

> Democracy is in principle the suppression of class government, though it is not yet the total suppression of classes. . . . The right to vote in a democracy makes its members virtually partners in the community, and this virtual partnership must in the end lead to real partnership.

After discussing the essential relationship between socialism and democracy, Bernstein comes to the question of patriotism. Contrary to Marx, he asserts that the workers have a fatherland and, since they are "partners," must defend it. "The complete breakup of nations is no beautiful dream," and the German nation carries out "its honorable share in the civilizing work of the world," especially in China where the Kaiser had just appropriated the base of Kiaochow.

> Insofar as the acquisition of Kiaochow is a means to secure Germany's right to a voice of protest [against the partitioning of China], and it will be difficult to gainsay that it does contribute to it, there is no reason to cry out against it. [Ibid., p. 173.]

But "protest" against colonialism is not the only purpose of acquisitions abroad. Five pages later we are told:

> If it is not reprehensible to enjoy the products of tropical plantations, neither can it be to cultivate such plantations ourselves. Occupation by Europeans need not injure the natives in their enjoyment of life. Moreover, only a conditional right of natives to the land occupied by them can be recognized.

Even when better analyses of imperialism and colonialism became available—and they were soon an almost constant feature of the *Neue Zeit*—Bernstein failed to see their significance. Just as his optimistic prognosis for capitalism was based on the survival of small business rather than on the really new features of monopoly and finance capitalism, so he missed altogether the meaning of the Boer War, of the Fashoda crisis, of Germany's frantic plunge into world politics, and of other signs indicating that the world was becoming too small for national capitalism. In a book so totally devoted to the brightening horizons of labor under an increasingly benign and benignly increasing capitalism, one does not expect to find an apprehension of impending crisis. Far from being the seminal book that some pretend to see in it, *Evolutionary Socialism* is mostly a period piece—dated 1899.

With this important reservation, we must give Bernstein credit for closing the gap between social democratic theory and social democratic practice. He brought the majority that condemned him to repudiate Blanquist fantasies; he described the labor movement as it was. By doing so, he prevented disillusionment from turning into panic. The German labor movement was spared the experience of great defectors; it knew no Millerand, no Briand, no Viviani, no Laval, no Ramsay MacDonald, no Mussolini. And this may be attributed to the existence of a revisionist theory, and also to the wisdom of Bebel who made room for the revisionists within the party, for those who could no longer follow

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Marx but remained Social Democrats. This is no small feat if we consider what was being abandoned. To criticize Marxism did not mean simply to revise this or that judgment in the light of recent developments. That was done by others—Hilferding, Luxemburg, Cunow, Lenin—with the intention of sharpening the scientific tools of class struggle. Karl Renner (the first president of the Austrian Republic) provided a far more cogent analysis of the new trends in capitalism, using Marx's methods of investigation and yet vindicating reform policies. What Bernstein abandoned was *the myth*, Marx's claim that a comprehensive philosophy exists, which guarantees (a) that capitalism is necessarily followed by socialism; (b) that socialism will be totally different from capitalism; and (c) that socialism will necessarily be better, or rather a "higher stage of humanity." Bernstein did not feel that Marxism could make good any such claim or that it could be both scientific *and* tied to any particular class or party. For him there was no engaged science: "Just as there is no liberal chemistry, the notion of a socialist sociology makes no sense to me" (*Sozialistische Monatshefte*, 1901, p. 32). By downgrading Marxism to a mere tool of social analysis, Bernstein not only deprived it of its attractiveness as a political philosophy; he deprived the labor movement of its justifying ideology, and socialism of its function as a savior religion.

The Theory of Democracy

THE PRICE of abandoning the myth is too high, unless something else can take its place. Did Bernstein suggest an alternative? Throughout his writings one senses an underlying idea—a fundamental devotion to democracy and its values:

> If at any time [there was] an economic demand of the socialist program [that would] have to be realized under conditions that would seriously endanger the development toward freedom, Social Democrats have always rejected it. The safeguarding of civil liberties has always enjoyed precedence over the fulfillment of economic postulates.
>
> The development and safety of the individual [*Persönlichkeit*] is the aim of all socialist measures, even those that may seem to be coercive. A closer look will always show that any coercion that is required must increase the total sum of freedom in the society. Coercion must give more freedom to more people than it takes away. [*Evolutionary Socialism*, p. 149.] *

Bernstein liked to quote Lassalle's words, "We are all citizens (*Bürger*)," and he complained about comrades who spoke of abolishing the *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (the German language cannot distinguish between "civil society" and "bourgeois society"), instead of the capitalist society.

Yet Bernstein had not worked out a theory of democracy. Like other socialists of his generation he tended to confuse political and economic democracy, participatory and representative democracy, democracy as a way of life and democracy as a system of government, democracy as government by the people and democracy as the assurance of due process, peaceful settlement of conflicts, law and order. Combining the traditions of Rousseau and Lassalle, he had an almost naive confidence in the goodness of the great majority and in abstract democracy. He was convinced, like all social democrats, that socialism is unthinkable without democracy and that democracy implies socialism.

Unfortunately, what had been postulated as a unity in lofty thought became an ugly dichotomy when theory was translated into reality. In 1917, the Bolshevik revolution suppressed democracy in order to let socialism "triumph"; in 1918 the SPD by-passed socialism in order to erect a democracy—of sorts, for the militant democratic movement was frozen into a democratic order. The man who had said that "the movement is everything" was now concerned with writing a constitution conceived no longer as an instrument of socialist policies but as an end in itself. Its defense against critics from the left became Bernstein's major theme, and he handled it as though democracy was synonymous with law and order: demonstrators

* Political theorists may note that Bernstein's formulation provides a bridge from Bentham to Rawls.

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were shot, divulgers of what generals considered military secrets were jailed, the press and theaters were gagged by censors, democratically elected state governments were deposed, the Republic's presidents ruled by emergency decree—all in the name of republican due process. It now became clear that Bernstein's plea for "democracy" had really been a plea to compromise with the status quo in Germany instead of dispossessing it. He defended the conduct of the SPD leaders during the revolution of 1918-19 and therefore must share responsibility for the defeat of the democratic aspirations. A *socialist* revolution was not on the agenda, to be sure; but the revolution of 1918 did not even fulfill the program of 1848, and the republican policies the SPD pursued in the 14 years of the Weimar Republic were not even reformist. Indeed, one may cogently accuse the SPD of not being reformist enough.

Was revisionism to blame, or was the SPD's failure the result of personal failings and historical accidents? Conceivably, a mass social democratic party, devoted to both democratic principles and reformist tactics, could nevertheless be dynamic, decisive, and militant. The Austrian social democrats provide a case in point: their defeat in the '30s can clearly be attributed to external conditions. I shall therefore not make unfair use of hindsight in evaluating the historic significance of revisionism. In history, *post hoc* is not always *propter hoc*, and revisionism must be understood on the basis of the conditions prevailing around 1900.

In the preceding half-century, the working class had fallen heir to the democratic aspirations the middle class had abandoned; these coincided with its own interests and with the necessities of class conflict. The trade unions were interested not only in material benefits but in security and a dependable body of laws. As Lenin saw clearly, revolution was not in the immediate interest of the workers; only intellectuals indulging in utopias looked down on the "legalism" of the trade union leaders. But to grow and to plan for the future, the labor movement had to strive not only for legal recognition and legal safeguards; it also had to insist on its own legality. It wrote contracts, it made political deals. It is plausible that the leaders overvalued legality and respectability—just as Bebel always wore a frock coat in the Reichstag and exhorted the younger deputees to dress properly.

This is what the revisionists understood by democracy: if the establishment was to recognize the labor movement as a partner, the labor movement had to be responsible and law-abiding. This then is the ultimate reason why Bernstein was so anxious to overcome the revolutionary phraseology and why he opposed the spontaneous stirrings of the working class during the revolution. Not the councils, the militias, the independent unions, not the unreliable local formations, but the well-established central organizations of labor were to determine the fate of the Republic. If any socialization was proposed, let the Reichstag adopt a law—but beware of revolutionary intervention by the People's Commissars (the interim government that ruled until January 1919). In the hottest days of the revolution (in *Was ist Sozialismus?*) Bernstein gave this Delphic definition: "Socialism is the sum of social demands and natural aspirations of those workers in modern capitalist society who have come to recognize their class situation and the task of their class."

Once more—the movement is the message. The revolution had created an ideal framework for class struggle to proceed in a legal order: no more police at the command of the bosses, no more weighted suffrage, no more aristocrats at the top of the social hierarchy. Now all depended on maintaining this democracy so that the labor movement would be able to act as the pressure group of the working class, without inhibitions. Its historic mission would thereby suffer some changes.

The historical significance of revisionism, hence, is to have reinstated the second half of the party's name, Social Democracy: "democratic" was not to qualify "socialism," but "socialism" was to qualify "democracy."

The majority of the workers also understood the term in this sense, an insight that has been obstructed all to long by Leninist

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historiography and that even non-Communist historians have been reluctant to accept: the Social Democrats could not "betray" any revolutionary principles because they had not prepared a revolution for 40 years; they were not "torn between" the Charybdis of theory and the Scylla of practice because the labor movement represented an interest rather than an idea.

Historians who assume that revolution should be on every proletarian's mind therefore ask the wrong questions: Why revisionism? How did that aberration insert itself into an otherwise revolutionary social democracy? The answer usually names one of several "villains"—the trade union bosses (Peter Gay), the party bosses (Robert Michels), the labor aristocrats (Lenin), the electoral laws and parliamentary customs, the "mass" society (Marcuse), or simply the lack of proper Marxist training (Trotsky). My favorite villain, however, is inertia, and the question I find much easier to answer is: Why *not* revisionism? It is Marxism that needs to be explained. People don't think about revolution unless they have been grievously provoked, and even in a revolution they would rather leave its execution to the proper organizations. The social democratic parties conducted pragmatic policies, tried to secure the most favorable institutional framework for those policies, and promised "socialism" only as a faraway ideal that might be approached asymptotically in the course of further history.

Ethical Socialism

IT IS TRUE, as we have said, that militants need a faith, a symbolism or myth. Democracy as a formal system of government, especially if it is defined as legalism, will usually not inflame the spirit, no matter how worthy it is of being defended with one's life. It is socialism that infuses the ardor of a transcendental goal into the political commitment. Since it was grand theory, Marxism had been able to project such an ideal and to endow it with the aura of philosophical and historical necessity, fusing what ought to be with what will be. Since revisionism rejected the idea of committed science, or the confusion of scientific and moral judgments, it could not claim, as Marxism does, that its reading of the "facts" must lead to moral conclusions. Even if historical materialism were proven correct and capitalism were of necessity to be followed by socialism—for which Bernstein saw no proof—it still would not follow that socialism is the only *possible* alternative, and if so, that it is the most desirable outcome.

The determinist philosophy of Marx's immediate followers has been a source of embarrassment to many young Marxists, and Marx himself had observed (in "The First Thesis on Feuerbach") that idealism rather than materialism had developed the theory of action. Revisionism, which aimed to create room for maneuver for the labor movement, had no use for a deterministic philosophy. Bernstein accepted the economic interpretation of history only with reservations: "Iron necessity [must be] modified in a way that increases the practice of social policy" (*Evolutionary Socialism*). But that admission forced him to answer the question he strove hard to avoid: Whence do you derive your socialist faith? Where does socialist morality come from?

In his academic lecture *How Is Scientific Socialism Possible?,* Bernstein came closest to an answer. The Kantian form of the question indicates where Bernstein believed the answer might lie: in the categorical imperative. This doctrine certainly implies a profound faith in the equality between men and also in the injunction to use no man as a means toward some end; it is democratic though not necessarily socialist. In the Kantian spirit, too, Bernstein suggested that the social sciences may give socialists the tools to realize their goal but are unable to determine these goals. Where do they come from? The answer is ethical socialism, and many revisionists have indeed found the source of their socialist faith in ethical philosophy or religion. Important among them were Jean Jaurès and Kurt Eisner (as a fellow Independent and martyr), and also the philosophers Hermann Cohen, Franz Staudinger, Karl Vorländer, Paul Natorp; the latter were

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all members of the Neo-Kantian school, and since they were the only professional philosophers writing on socialism, it has often been suggested that an affinity exists between revisionism and Kantianism.

Moreover, Bernstein permitted himself a pun at the end of his major work. Denouncing the hypocrisy of Marxist propaganda, he exclaimed, away with this "cant," let us go back to Kant; let us study "the preconditions [prolegomena] of socialism," as Kant had written *Prolegomena of any future Metaphysics*. Bernstein knew this from reading Friedrich Albert Lange's popular *History of Materialism*, a source frankly acknowledged. But his other writings do not indicate that he had either read or understood Kant. As to the Neo-Kantian socialists I have named, they were trying to do precisely what was most repugnant to Bernstein: to deduce the necessity of socialism *a priori* from the categorical imperative, an endeavor at least as dangerous as the Hegelian dialectic. Nevertheless, there were Neo-Kantians who were not revisionists, such as Max Adler, who made his political home at the extreme left of the Austrian SP, and there were ethical socialists who were not Kantians. I mention here only Tolstoy, Gustav Landauer, Oscar Wilde, Bertrand Russell, Ramsey MacDonald, some more radical than the Marxists, some rather less. The sources of socialist ethics are scattered over a wide spectrum, and though it is true that Marxists have dealt very unfairly with Kant, nothing permits us to assign to him a place in socialist history. Neither the thought of Bernstein nor that of Jean Jaurès or any other socialist stands in relation to Kant as Marxism stands in relation to Hegel; its mechanics is in no way derived from the earlier thinker.

Yet though he has not spelled it out himself, or in a philosophical manner, I think that the query about the sources of Bernstein's socialism can be answered. He was deeply committed to the movement; all his life he was part of it and shared the experience of its members. His theories reflected the understanding of the movement by the workers. He drew his ethical directives from the life of the party. His values were *solidarity, justice, equality, liberty, progress*. These are existential determinants of the working class organization. They are not abstract philosophical notions; they are neither *a priori* nor derived but are given with that *Arbeiterwelt* in which he lived. They also constitute principles that guide and direct action. Bernstein's realism was not accommodating but flexible. It has often been charged that revisionism leads to opportunism; the attitude in Bernstein and others (one thinks of Ramsey MacDonald in England, Kurt Eisner in Bavaria) during World War I suggests otherwise, and Bernstein always understood the movement to be a community of militants sharing humanitarian and laborite values. But, in contrast to Sorel, he did not think that the movement was so much a value-in-itself that it did not need to show material successes and achievements.

Beyond Revisionism

IN THE DAYS OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC and still more so since World War II, social democracy lost much of its original moral impetus; it has become a representation of interests and a school of management. It owes more to Keynes and the Fabians than to Marx or Bernstein. The welfare state requires much more cooperation between the "social partners" than was thought possible by even the most "reformist" labor representatives of Bernstein's generation.

Social democrats now must try to make capitalism recession-proof, inflation-proof, accident-proof, old-age-proof, etc. They must govern to make the system work, not to transform it—for transformations now are likely to come from other forces, including transnational corporations, nonsocialist governments, national revolutions, and international organizations. The programs that socialists now have to develop or to operate are also much more comprehensive than anything that was even thinkable at the time of Bernstein: national planning for industry and agriculture, operation of nationalized industries, redistribution of income, public health and housing and other public services, price regulation, workers' participation in the management of corporations. All this more often

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requires cooperation than confrontation; any conflicts of interest or of conception must be negotiated and arbitrated rather than allowed to erupt in an open test of strength.

Reform policies in the first half of the century were essentially redistributive: one fought over the share of the product that was to fall to each class. The most advanced concept of that time was Hilferding's "the political wage"; considerations of overall economic and social policy were still based on the assumption that the planning of production must be left to the enterprise, and that prices will be determined by the market. Today's reformers cannot leave such important decisions to the blind forces of the market. They are essentially regulators, and therefore different from the labor leaders who fought with individual businessmen. All this was seen much more clearly by Renner who unfairly has been forgotten.

I mentioned earlier that Bernstein's analysis of modern capitalism had missed the significance of large-scale enterprise and monopolistic organizations; he was not up-to-date even then. Today his kind of reformism is as obsolete as Marx's model of revolution. Bernstein had adequately described the opportunities of successful class action in the world prior to World War I, but he would have to learn much in order to be at home in welfare-state economics and policies. They require a larger horizon than is usually acquired in trade union schools. In his day, labor policies had to adapt themselves to the vicissitudes of capitalist development. Today the economy must and can be shaped to fit the vision of social planners.

It is therefore ironical that just now young German socialists are trying to revive Bernstein's memory as that of an ideologist. He, who was so averse to all ideologies, might have been much surprised. He was everything but a prophet. Perhaps the explanation is psychological rather than political: what is needed is not so much an ideology as an attitude, a style "nonideological yet principled" (as Irving Howe has said), realistic yet not opportunistic, loyal to the party without surrendering to the bosses. Bernstein was a man with whom one can disagree without losing respect for his decency; his democratic modesty has created a tradition that is still alive in Western labor parties.

Another reason for Bernstein's revival after three-quarters of a century is rather paradoxical. His early theories encouraged labor to seek reforms and to assume responsibilities even though the "system" was reactionary and in particular the state was antidemocratic. Today, the New Left has adopted the strategy of "marching through the institutions," disregarding their hateful, alledgedly "fascist" nature. Students who hope to become government-paid professors and researchers can only look with sympathy to the wise old man who taught the workers to forget the symbols of the police state and to make themselves at home in the enemy's house. They have interpreted Bernstein's ideas in a syndicalist sense that permits them to coexist with the establishment without recognizing its legitimacy. The pragmatic, nonideological approach to politics also relieves the individual member of the "totalizing" tendency that inheres in every party.

Bernstein himself was fanatically anti-Communist, and he would be aghast at some young Socialists' inability to distinguish between the East and West German states. But his positive attitude to patriotism and his "nonideological approach" may appear to some of his new admirers as legitimation of their own desire to keep the Eastern option open and to minimize the difference between the two German states.

To conclude on a positive note: the implicit though unspoken commitment to an ethical foundation of socialism that can be ascribed to Bernstein may be cited to balance the all-too-visible drift toward technocracy in the Social Democratic party. Although Bernstein cannot give guidance in this area, and although his thought was neither profound nor original, he radiates through his example as an honest, courageous socialist, devoted first of all to the movement, and conscious of the fact that socialism is first of all a movement of people. He belonged to the generation of great humanitarian socialists, which also included Jean Jaurès, Rosa Luxemburg, Eugene Debs, and Norman Thomas. □

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Lewis Coser

Midge Decter and the Boys on the Beach

Midge Decter has become *Commentary*'s specialist in baiting minorities. Some years ago she wrote a book studded with venomous attacks against liberated women. More recently she wrote about a race riot in New York City and the attendant looting in terms of the animalistic behavior of the black rioters. And now she has followed this up with a vicious attack on homosexuals ("The Boys on the Beach," *Commentary*, September 1980).

Such soured disdain for the life of minorities has recently surfaced in many corners of the American cultural landscape. It surely provided some of the fuel for the passionate assault of the self-styled moral majority during the recent electoral campaign. Midge Decter does not stand alone. Her private obsessions have become public issues. She sees herself as a moral physician intent upon curing the diseases of modernity, but her writings are symptoms of a widespread retreat from the generous moral commitment to the cause of minorities that infused the '60s. That Decter is a Jewish woman writing in a Jewish magazine edited by her husband, Norman Podhoretz, is also significant. Jews traditionally have been on the side of other minorities whom they correctly perceived as fellow sufferers from majority prejudice and discrimination. Some of them, having "made it," are now ready to join the majority pack. *Commentary* has become their mouthpiece. Midge Decter gives no evidence of having any familiarity with the vast literature on the subject of homosexuality. In the major part of her essay she relies entirely on observation and casual encounters with a group of affluent homosexuals during Fire Island vacations in the '60s. The second part is largely based on one journalistic account of homosexual communities in the '70s, on the "evidence" of a TV documentary, and on one encounter she had with an angry group of gays who protested the running of a prejudiced article in *Harper's* magazine. Would *Commentary* run an essay on Jews based on casual observations of the weekend going-ons at Grossinger, supplemented by a travelogue on Jewish communities and a Philip Roth novel?

The first part of Decter's essay is mainly voyeuristic. Throughout the summers she spent on Fire Island, her attention seems to have been riveted on gay activities. She "was engaged to the fullest" by the gays, she admits, indeed "by little else." She and her friends felt the need frequently to visit a rough gay bar in the neighborhood to observe the goings-on with fascination. Such expeditions seem to have been similar to an earlier generation's slumming trips to Harlem bars. Yet Decter is apparently unaware of this *nostalgie de la boue*. But where middle-class voyeurs in Harlem used to indulge in a kind of romantic glorification of its denizens, Decter now looks with utter contempt at the gays she once observed with such fascination. These are not grown men, she asserts; they are immature, girlish, vain, pouting, forever displaying their bodies, and their penises in particular, catty, competitive, unable to form secure attachments, alcoholics who are so given to getting stewed that she finds it doubtful that they can fuck in a satisfying manner.

Decter's Fire Island gays are spendthrifts who can indulge in lavish displays because they are not burdened with family responsibilities. "Their smooth and elegant exteriors, unmussed by traffic with the detritus of modern family existence, constituted a kind of sniggering reproach to their striving and harried straight brothers." This part of the essay displays a kind of unconscious mixture of sniggering denigration with barely repressed attraction. Gays seem to have a good deal of fun, and they do not deserve it. One is reminded of Macauley's observation that Puritans did not object to bear-bating because it gave pain to the bears but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.

Gays cheat, it seems, because they escape the usual burdens of family obligations: "The desire to escape from the sexual reminder of birth and

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death, with its threat of paternity . . . was the main underlying desire that sent those Fire Island homosexuals into the arms of other men." Gays, Decter avers, are not men who can experience authentic love and authentic desire; they can only be defined negatively as men who reject normal existential burdens. They are defined not in terms of what they are but in terms of what they are not, and so their identity is stripped from them. Decter thinks that she has struck through their masks and that she has revealed that without masks they are empty men. They are contemptible because they are less than men.

Decter's description of Fire Island gays is mild compared to the picture she paints of gay life in the '70s. According to her, the homosexual community is now mired in drugs, violence, compulsive sexuality, and sadomasochism. The girlish life styles she observed with such fascinated attention in the '60s have gone forever, she states. Present-day gays are brutal, suicidal, self-pitying bullies. She thinks it is "undeniable" that there is an "increasing longing among homosexuals to do away with themselves—if not in an actual physical sense then at least spiritually—a longing whose chief emblem, among others, is the leather bar. In the leather bar both the brutalized and the brutalizer announce a common and mutual loathing of the flesh and especially of the self, the spirit, that moves it." While the Fire Island gays of the '60s refused to grow up and develop a mature and responsible self, the homosexuals of today loathe themselves as well as their sexual partners.

IN THE FACE of such hostility one almost wearies to point out that Decter's portrait is almost entirely fanciful. To be sure, there are S-M bars frequented by homosexuals, but most are frequented by heterosexuals. Some homosexuals indulge in alcohol, drugs, and compulsive sex—so do many heterosexuals. But even if one were able to show that the proportion of drug-takers, alcoholics, and compulsive and brutalizing sexual adventurers were higher among homosexuals than heterosexuals, this would prove very little. Decter omits any account of the causes of such pathologies. The great majority of gays live stressful lives and such stress, it stands to reason, can lead to pathology. A community of men who must always live on edge—subject as they are to assault, blackmail, police brutality, and entrapment—will find it harder than others to live ordinary lives. Homosexuals are denounced from pulpits, treated with contempt by the square community, ridiculed and disdained by much of the political and medical establishment. They are viewed as potential child molesters, depraved, neurotic, irresponsible wretches; how then can one expect them not to display their scars and to show a certain amount of pathology?

Decter shows no interest in such matters. Instead of attending to the victimizers who are largely responsible for whatever pathologies may be found among gays, she attacks the victims. That Decter has no sense of empathy and charity we already know, but in this essay her assault on the victims of societal persecution and discrimination passes all previous bounds.

She cites only one scientific study of homosexuals, that by Alan R. Bell and Martin Weinberg, *Homosexualities* (1978), and this she distorts. The authors present a careful typology of a sample of San Francisco homosexuals, arguing that it is misleading to assume that all homosexuals have the same sexual and life styles. They show that homosexual men may live in "close-coupled," in "open-coupled," in "functional," or in "dysfunctional" sexual arrangements. Only the last type presents the pathological characteristics Decter attributes to all gays. Yet she chooses not to mention all of this and cites only the authors' finding that homosexuals have had more sex with different people than heterosexuals. This, I submit, is not only irresponsible, it is dishonest.

An open season on gay-baiting seems likely in the times to come. And there is Midge Decter, leading the pack. □

Amira Husaini

Religious Power in Iran: Pre-Islamic Origins

Persons who are not familiar with Islam may wonder at the meager support of the Islamic and Arab governments for Iran, the self-proclaimed champion of Islam, in the recent war with Iraq, the avowedly socialist state. This may seem even more surprising in view of the great rivalry between the Arab states and their fear of Iraqi expansionism. The reason is that many Muslims, despite their deep distress over the open hostility between two Muslim nations, do not recognize Ayatollah

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Khomeini's leadership as in any way binding upon them and consider him a mere political leader, albeit a Muslim, who is using Islam to promote his own power and prestige. For many Muslims the world over, at issue here is Khomeini's interpretation of Islam as outlined in his testament *Vilayat-i Faqih* ("The Rule of the Jurisprudent"), which loosely translates into English as "Islamic Government."

The foundation of the state envisioned in this work, which has been embodied in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, rests upon the figure of a powerful, all-knowing, wise, benevolent, supreme religious authority or jurisprudent who acts as the final arbiter of all major or minor decisions, if he so chooses, in society. Obedience to him is incumbent on all members of the Islamic community, since he knows what is best for them; and it is he who can ensure that they act according to God's will. "It is right that the supreme religious authority should oversee the work of the prime minister or of the president to make sure they do not make mistakes or go against the law" (Khomeini, quoted from Oriana Fallaci's interview with him published in the *Chicago Tribune*, October 7, 1979). The Ayatollah appears to imply that this supreme religious authority is infallible when he states, "I do know that during my long lifetime, I have always been right about what I said" (from the same interview). Furthermore, this authority is accountable to no one but God.

Throughout Islam's 1400 years, the question of the best type of leadership for the community has divided the Islamic world and occasionally has even led to war between dissenting groups. However, few views of leadership have digressed as far from the teachings of the Koran and the tradition of the Prophet Mohammed as have those expressed by Ayatollah Khomeini. The Ayatollah's style of leadership is also a departure from the example of the Prophet and the Shi'ite Imams. Especially striking is his love of public adulation, about which he said, "I enjoy it. I enjoy hearing and seeing them" (the Fallaci interview). It is evident also in his sanction of hundreds of thousands of large portraits of himself that may strike the more sober Muslim, even though unintended, as an inculcation of idol worship banned by the Koran. The Koran repeatedly forbids the ascription of any supernatural and intercessionary power even to Mohammed the Prophet.

IF THE AYATOLLAH'S VIEWS on leadership do not derive from early, pristine Islam and have no antecedents in Islamic theories of leadership, where do they originate? Many derive from pre-Islamic political and religious thinking in Iran. This is not to suggest, of course, that Khomeini has consciously tried to revive this early ideology. It is interesting that, although as a Muslim he may consciously reject nationality and nationalism, Khomeini is still a product of Iranian cultural traditions, where his all-powerful, infallible, supreme theologian-leader may be found. This pervasive influence explains why the Ayatollah does not try to explain the source of his supreme religious authority and sanction. He may, of course, know that such justification is nonexistent. It is, however, more likely that he has not thought such justification necessary, since as a product of Iranian cultural tradition he would regard such a position for the leader as quite natural.

Consequently it is to ancient Iran that we must turn to find the origin of Ayatollah Khomeini's *faqih* and not to the Koran or the Shari'a. According to ancient Iranian ideas of sacral kingship, religion and royalty were intertwined. The kings claimed rule by special divine dispensation and, furthermore, that a part of the Godhead's divine majesty was invested in them: their rule was absolute and all-powerful.

As the society of ancient Iran developed, authority was split between a secular leader and a religious leader, both claiming divine dispensation. The king claimed *Farr-i Izadi* or *kingly glory*; the religious leader or *Mubad-Mubadan* claimed to be the ultimate spokesman for God, or *Ahura-Mazda*, to the people.

Pre-Islamic religious texts such as *Sad Dar* recommended unquestioning loyalty and allegiance to religious authorities and threatened those who disobeyed with eternal hell fire. The religious class maintained monopoly over the sacred language and texts, and control over the processes of justice and education. *Sad Dar* (chaps. 8 and 27) admonished believers to follow the advice of the clergy on every aspect of conduct to ensure salvation. *The Dinkard*, another religious text, categorically stated (bk. 6, p. 9), "The spiritual head must be so regarded as the religious lord and obeyed that the ruler and the sovereign should also do nothing without the advice of the spiritual lord, the head-priest." However, the close association between clergy and secular power finally undermined the hold of the religious leaders on the masses. When diverse social and economic problems brought about the downfall of the extensive Sasanian armies by the armies of the

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Muslims, the religious class was wiped out.

The advent of Islam and the conversion of the masses in Iranian lands to Islam temporarily destroyed the religious basis for such claims to authority. Yet the belief in the validity of these claims, both temporal and religious, was not eradicated completely. With the rise of the Abbasids, whose accession owed much to the assistance and sympathy of their Iranian followers, the view that a secular leader of the community had independent divine sanction and was the shadow of God on earth surfaced once again. This was achieved easily, since the Koran or the Prophetic tradition contained few direct injunctions regarding secular authority.

But the vacuum left by the destruction of the Zoroastrian religious authority could not be filled as easily, since Islam placed many direct strictures against the rise of a sanctimonious clergy. Even here, however, the belief did not entirely disappear; it surfaced from time to time among the more extreme and heterodox groups, termed Shi'ite *ghulat* (extremists). Although this term has been applied to diverse groups of extremists, one characteristic united those that appeared or spread among the Muslims in Iranian-speaking regions. This was a great veneration for the religious class and a tendency to ascribe supernatural power to their leaders beyond that permitted by the Koran and the teachings of the Prophet. Some even went so far as to believe that religious leaders were infallible and must be obeyed without question.

The blind trust some extremists put in their leaders had disastrous consequences that spread far beyond the immediate group to the rest of the Islamic world. The most notable early extremist group was led by Hasan al-Sabbah, who adopted assassination as one of his principal doctrines. In the name of Islam, he and his followers destroyed some of the most capable Muslim leaders at a time when Islamic society needed to pull its resources together to meet the challenge of the Crusades from the West and the Mongol onslaught from the East. Thus they inadvertently enabled the Europeans to control for two centuries important parts of the Muslim world and the Mongols to do irreparable damage to the society and economy of the central lands of Islam.

In the 16th century another militant extremist Shi'i order, the Safavids, brought most of the Iranian-speaking region under its control. Both the use of force and the ignorance of the Iranian majority of the Arabic language of the Koran—according to the Muslims the actual word of God and hence untranslatable—enabled the Safavids to impose their brand of Islam on the population.

With the passage of time, the leaders of the Safavid house became more interested in developing the secular aspect of their power and left the religious sphere to professional theologians, whose use of Shi'ite belief enabled them to gain more power and prestige among the non-Arabic-speaking population. Though the rise of this extreme form of Shi'ism may have eventually helped forge feelings of nationalism among the Persians, it also created much discord in the Muslim world and caused a series of protracted and internecine wars between two leading Muslim powers of the time, the Ottomans and the Safavids.

Unfortunately, these wars occurred when the Muslim world could ill afford them. During the 16th and 17th centuries, Western Europe was undergoing the multifaceted revolution that gave rise to the modern age and that, for at least two centuries, established its unchallenged hegemony over the non-Western world. The failure of the Ottomans to keep abreast of this transformation, especially in the military field, proved fatal. Their preoccupation with their Eastern neighbors not only weakened their ability to meet the military challenge of the rising Western powers but also to defend their borders against the fanatical Safavids. These conflicts obscured other vital developments in the West—in economics, science, and technology—at a time when the Ottomans were still in a position to adopt many of the changes that were occurring in the West. So, ironically, once more, much as in the days of the Crusades the Islamic world was hurt by fanatical militancy. By the 18th century, when the Safavids were overthrown, the Europeans' advance had gone too far for the Ottomans and other Muslims to emulate.

The 18th century was no less critical for the Safavids, whose last members had deteriorated to degenerate despots who spent their time mainly in the pursuit of pleasure and only held power by their claim to be godly anointed kings. Finally, when a small group of Afghans challenged their rule, the last member of the dynasty was overthrown. But Afghan rule lacked indigenous support and a strong army, and did not last. Five decades of civil war followed, until the Qajar tribe emerged as victors. But war had shattered the country's administration and economy.

The only group to benefit from the century of upheaval within Iran was the clergy. It took the opportunity to ascribe to itself powers over its

Continued on page 235

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Peter Clecak

"The Pleasures of Maturity"

THE WINDING PASSAGE: ESSAYS AND SOCIOLOGICAL JOURNEYS: 1960-1980, by Daniel Bell. Cambridge, Mass.: ABT Books. 370 pp. $25.00.

A socialist in economics, a liberal in politics, and a conservative in culture: this is how Daniel Bell tried to make the briefest possible sense of himself amid the political and cultural confusions of the moment. As ideological one-liners go, his formulation is at least arguable, though it may not convince many socialists. In spite of his diverse ideological preferences, Bell is not without an intellectual base. He was, after all, a guiding force in the development of neoconservative styles of thought during the late 1960s and '70s. And judging from the essays in *The Winding Passage*, he clearly wishes to retain an affiliation: he continues to associate with these intellectuals, to contribute to their journals and participate in their symposia. But Bell should not be judged simply by the company he keeps. He seems temperamentally unable to subscribe unreservedly to any party, even an amorphous party of intellectuals. Among his chosen comrades, he commands a minority status not merely because he persists in using the concept of socialism as a normative perspective on the sphere of economy. He also may be the most conservative of the lot on cultural matters, if only because he considers religion a perennially important historical force as well as an abiding personal concern. His intellectual base thus seems to offer some of the comforts of home, though by no means all of them.

> These are the essays of a prodigal son [Bell announces straightaway in *The Winding Passage*]. They are essays written in my middle years, midway in the journey of our life, in that dark wood, seeking a return to the straight way of my ancestors. I know that the world I live in is vastly different from theirs, yet the duplex nature of man remains largely the same, now as then.

The Winding Passage, then, does not portray another callow and submissive youth returning to his father, superficially wiser about the ways of the world yet merely grateful to be home. Bell's attempted return is more tentative, more complicated, and perhaps less immediately satisfying. For these reasons it is also more interesting. A celebrant of the discipline of history and tradition, Bell nevertheless seems moved to stress the peculiarities of his individual talent, to press—within limits, of course—the claims of the self. He seeks to construct a distinctive, mature self out of the materials of his past. And he endeavors to understand that past, both its parochial, Hebraic center and its larger Western (and non-Western) circumference. From this tense interplay of autobiographical and historical ambitions, Bell's work derives much of its range and power—its reflective and restless character, its lucidity and its energy.

Self-conscious (though not unreasonably so) about his own disposition to the sin of intellectual pride, Bell seeks the discipline of the Law and the clarity of orthodoxy: "When heresy becomes *à la mode*, orthodoxy, paradoxically, is the stronger standpoint for criticism of society." He underlines this notion with a concluding parable: "Two monks have been circling in the desert for a long time. Finally they sit down. Neither says a word. Sometime later, one speaks: 'My brother is lost.' The other is silent. After a long meditation, he says: 'No, I am not lost. I am here. The Way is lost.'" But for one making his way through the winding passage—the Dantesque transition from "the netherworld to the fires of redemption"—the Law is the indispensable compass: " . . . if The Way [the Law] is lost," Bell observes, "all is lost."

I call attention to the personal center of these

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essays for two reasons. First, they add nothing substantial to Bell's sociological apparatus, set out in detail in *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973) and *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976). There Bell outlines and illustrates his by now familiar view of social structure. Here, he employs his sociological contraption without adding to it. Second, the personal center unifies *The Winding Passage*. Although not a full intellectual portrait, this collection does provide a snapshot of Bell as he approaches sixty. Nor does the pose seem casually struck. Bell's biography conforms neatly to the decades of recent American history. Born in 1919, he seems to have lived a life that breaks easily into twenty-year chunks. 1920-1940: early years of preparation, culminating in a youthful encounter with socialism and membership in the second generation of New York intellectuals. 1940-1960: an active life as a prolific journalist, editor, polemicist the *New Leader*, *Fortune*, etc.). 1960-1980: academic work, first at Columbia, then at Harvard. As Bell acknowledges, these overlapping divisions represent emphases, not exclusive directions. Even in the most recent period, he confesses, his "temperament" has drawn him to "activist concerns" (as founding co-editor with Irving Kristol of the *Public Interest* from 1965 to 1973, and as a member of several government commissions on current social issues).

For the most part, these essays display Bell from a contemplative angle: during the 1960s and '70s, he suggests, his interests were "more scholarly, reflective, and academic," and his subjects "more theoretical, philosophical, and methodological." We are thus meant to see Bell in his study, not in the conference rooms of government, or along the back alleys of ideological politics. Mainly fragments, these early pieces explore themes that neither contradict Bell's current sense of things nor presuppose his sociological apparatus: the dangers and follies of the early New Left; the misguided visions of such utopians as Fourier and Veblen; and the perennial issue of Jewish identity.

The old Bell puts in cameo appearances—in an insightful though slashing and ultimately tasteless dissection of Michael Harrington's *The Twilight of Capitalism*, and in his irritable though not altogether unconvincing rejoinders to coarse attacks on the "end of ideology" thesis that he reformulated and presented in the late '50s. On balance, however, Bell prefers to have us focus on his present self, on the image—and substance—of an intellectual who has more or less completed his framework of historical and sociological vision, put away the illusions of childhood, and entered into a period of serious reflection on ultimate questions. In these essays, then, the cultural conservative overshadows the political liberal and totally eclipses the economic socialist.

II

ALTHOUGH BELL INSISTS that he does not explore a single thesis, the essays in *The Winding Passage* amount to a series of meditations on the wages of excess—explorations of the economic, political, social, cultural, and personal consequences of ignoring the Law. Throughout, the dramatic opposition turns on the disciplined, knowing self in conflict with its unrestrained, antinomian and thoroughly subversive underside.

> The modern view of man takes over only the aspect of freedom, not [man's] . . . finitude [Bell observes in an introductory piece on technology, nature, and society]; it sees man as a creature of infinite power able to bend the world to his own will. . . . [In a word,] modern culture particularly in its utopian versions, denies the biblical idea of sin . . . [which] derives from the fact that man as a limited and finite creature denies his finiteness and seeks to reach beyond it—beyond culture, beyond nature, beyond history.

Without a sense of justice, righteousness, and proportion—a commitment to limits imposed by the Law—man becomes his own worst enemy. The Law can be tyrannical, Bell admits. Yet when it is neglected, there can be no freedom, no mature self, no civilization. In such circumstances, the cord of religious memory snaps, and the antinomian self, which haunts Bell's imagination, spreads like a plague as individuals consider themselves unbound by tradition and institutions. This theme animates Bell's vision, guiding his complicated return to his Jewish roots and informing his reflections on the historical period through which he has lived. It structures his criticisms of the millennial character of utopian Marxism, allowing him to conduct yet another brief—but tony—oration at the nihilistic implications of modernist and postmodernist culture, which in his view subordinates moral to aesthetic considerations, and in the end subsumes both under unrestrained sensuality. And it undergirds his critique of the "hedonistic" imperatives of late capitalism, its stress on the pleasures of consumption and its subversion of the Protestant ethic of work.

Moreover, Bell applies his perception of the consequences of the antinomian self to ever wider

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historical contexts. He traces excesses—of sensuality, of reason, of faith in technology, of ambition (even the untempered will to do good)—from the present to the early moments of Western civilization. The nihilistic implications that Bell finds in the writings of Herbert Marcuse, N. O. Brown, and R. D. Laing are prefigured in Fourier and Rousseau, in the Protestant Reformation (a principal source of modern evil by virtue of its weakening of institutional mediations), in the early Christian heretics (gnostics, pelagians, antinomians), in Dionysian excess. Bell's history of consciousness, this is to say, turns on a single theme, relentlessly sounding itself, exhibiting endless variations, but coming ever to the same end: to warnings of social disorder, cultural nihilism, and a disintegration and thinning of human personality.

The integrating theme of the virtues of restraint and stoic resignation not only structures Bell's perceptions of the history of consciousness. This theme dominates his essentially classical liberal political vision. At best, he observes in an interesting piece on "Liberalism in the Post-industrial Society," politics "can be the conscious art of bargaining, of trade-offs, of what, in game theory, is called non-zero-sum games." At worst, Bell declares in an essay on "Ethnicity and Social Change," politics becomes more than an "arena of interests or of social transformations": it turns into an arena of passions. "The 'risk' of such inflamed political competition is that issues may not be negotiable (as they are when tied to interests alone), but become 'causes' that invite violent conflict and even civil war."

This theme of the consequences of excess even may have influenced the formation of Bell's sociological apparatus. Throughout these essays he argues, often forcefully, against "holistic" views of society (especially Marxiain views). Whatever its merits and drawbacks, this disjunctive view of society proceeds from Bell's cultural conservatism and reinforces his political liberalism. For if change in economic, political, and cultural spheres follows different rhythms, the disjunctive view of society proceeds from Bell's cultural conservatism and reinforces his political liberalism. For if change in economic, political, and cultural spheres follows different rhythms, the disjunctive view of society effectively rules out revolutionary politics and utopian social schemes. Society cannot be changed all at once. Though it may be improved, it cannot be perfected. The political wages of the major sins Bell counsels against, then, is certain failure.

III

SINCE I CANNOT ATTEMPT a full analysis of Bell's performance in this brief space, let me offer a few minor critical observations and then express what must amount simply to a preference concerning the political and cultural implications of his case for cultural conservatism.

It would violate the spirit of Bell's cultural conservatism to emphasize its familiar character. Nor would it be fair, considering the nature of this (or any) collection of occasional pieces, to fault Bell for not developing his arguments in more detail. Still, I was disappointed from time to time by this limitation. Bell typically begins an essay by setting the context—often masterfully—and ends by exploring his main points all too briefly. His fragmentary discussion of New York intellectuals is a case in point. The interesting, though diffuse, meditations on religion is another. And his intriguing though unelaborated suggestions concerning the potential use of market mechanisms for social purposes is still another. What I am proposing—doubtless unfairly—is that Bell should have written the social autobiography of a major American intellectual, including an account of his failures and mistakes, his hesitations and revisions.

Bell's case for cultural conservatism nevertheless is impressive, even within the scope of a collection of assorted pieces. Yet in spite of his considerable powers of intellectual resistance, I believe that he finally submits to his preoccupation with the antinomian self and its civilized counterpart. His primary perspective on modern history, this is to say, serves him well only to a point. Beyond this point, it conceals—and even distorts—much of what Bell sets out to illuminate. The demands of Bell's mature persona threaten to subvert his desire to understand the sweep of the history of consciousness and the shapes of contemporary politics and culture. The claims of coherence interfere with the evidence of social inquiry, and the critic's lamp often turns into a mirror in which Bell perceives himself. On balance, he seems to admire what he sees. I do, too, but the perceiving self in this case, as in any, does not allow for sufficient variety.

Bell's familiar characterization of cultural conservatism thus calls for a familiar critique. It is nevertheless worth proposing once again, even in desperately brief outline. For all its refinements and its attention to technological and economic progress, Bell's vision seems to me inadequate as a basis for describing, analyzing, and evaluating the

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entry of ordinary persons into the workings of modern history. His cultural conservatism encourages a certain condescension toward democratic politics, especially its rough edges. He not only rules out revolutionary politics (as do democratic socialists). He takes an excessively cautious attitude toward any political activity he considers irrational: either not centered around a play of predictable interests or channeled through existing institutions. It is not enough, however, to regret the intrusions of passion—even crude, quasi-religious passions—as a force in politics. Nor is it sufficient to point to the logical extremes of protest politics: "violent conflict and civil war." The dangers are real, and the risks often high. But the stakes, at least in recent American political history, have been even higher: in the black civil rights movement, in the antiwar movement, in the women's movement. How could these have succeeded (insofar as they have) without expressions of passion and social anger? As Bell himself admits, a reasonable politics requires unusual circumstances. All sides must accept the rules, he observes. "But this is itself possible not only where there is a high degree of legitimacy to a society, but where there is a conscious effort to reduce inequalities and expand opportunities, and where there is a sense of fairness for all individuals in the society." Progress toward a democratic polity and the even more elusive goal of a fair distribution of wealth has required a more spirited approach to politics than Bell's vision easily condones. Cultural conservatives may applaud the results of democratic movements. Often as not, however, they do so *post facto*, once the political dust has settled.

IV

I FIND BELL'S VISION of culture cramped, too. Though repulsed by extremes, he also seems fascinated by them. His account of the profanation of modern society, for example, weaves together several thematic strands: the gradual realizaton of the antinomian self following the Reformation; the emergence and spread of modernist and postmodernist culture; the diffusion of hedonistic values of the culture of consumption. In each case, Bell gravitates toward the most outrageous extensions—and distensions—of modern experiments in self-definition and self-expression.

> What modernity has done—in its drive to enhance experience, in its repudiation of tradition and the past, in its sanction for the new and the idea that the individual could remake his self in accordance solely with desire—is to disrupt" the coherence which marks the well-crafted self in the name of an unbounded self.

Examples of the dispositions Bell names may be found in the work of everyone from Gide to R. D. Laing. But Bell's organization of these dispositions, I think depends too heavily on the assumption that extremes define the subculture of art, and by diffusion eventually characterize wider contexts of culture.

One test of such a reading of culture turns on how well it accounts for the textures of American life in the '60s and '70s. Here, I believe, Bell's cautionary tale becomes misleading. At least I do not find American society heavily populated by nihilists, hedonists, narcissists, slackers, and connoisseurs of the unbounded self. Bell's exaggerations obscure the fundamental cultural development in postwar America—namely, a quest for self-fulfillment that extended during these years to members of previously excluded social categories, from women and black people to Eastern and Southeastern European ethnics. From Bell's perspective, however, the democratic character of this quest and the admittedly debatable successes reported by persons are only faintly visible. Indeed, the cultural conservatism that he expresses often transforms important surfaces and textures into simple caricature. One last example must do. In "The Return of the Sacred?" a suggestive essay on the future of religion, Bell subsumes the Christian resurgence of the '60s and '70s under the category of "Fundamentalist," and calls it simply a "moralizing" religion. Accurate to a point, this characterization is finally misleading. No attempt is made to distinguish among evangelical and neo-Pentecostal strains; no reference appears to the spread of charismatic modes of worship to Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant churches during these decades. As a consequence, there is no sympathetic attempt to see the range of real people searching, separately and together, for ways to define themselves against the uncertainties of society and the even greater uncertainties of what lies beyond death. What Bell would find, were he to set aside his generalizations on religion, is a mingling of tradition and innovation, antinomian excess and grace; old theological premises and newer therapeutic nostrums, plain sense and nonsense: a syncretic mixture (to borrow Bell's phrase) at once splendid, sordid, and consolingly ordinary.

Bell, as much as any other contemporary observer, knows that the axial principle of con-

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temporary culture is the quest for fulfillment. He reminds us, wisely I think, to distrust the motives and suspect the probable outcomes of this search, especially as it unfolds at the fringes of the culture. And he points—in a general way—to its follies and frequent shallowness. What he obscures, however, is of equal if not greater importance. Bell minimizes the increasingly democratic cultural and political character of the quest, its relative novelty to tens of millions of citizens. And he passes over its rich ordinary aspects that most of us pursue temperately as we go about the ancient tasks—at once sacred and mundane—of earning a living, caring for children, comforting aging parents, cultivating friendships, engaging perennial religious questions, and even enduring the frequent disappointments of political involvement. □

Rose Laub Coser

Women's Rights & Family Demands

AT ODDS: WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN AMERICA FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE PRESENT, by Carl N. Degler. New York: Oxford University Press. 527 pp., $19.95.

FEMINISM AND SUFFRAGE: THE EMERGENCE OF AN INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN AMERICA 1848-1869, by Ellen Carol DuBois. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 220 pp. Cloth, $17.50; paper, $4.95.

Time and again, the demise of the family in America has been predicted by ultraradicals and conservatives alike, by the former as part of their wishful thinking, by the latter as part of their disenchantment with every sign of social change. It is therefore a pleasure to read a book on this theme without an apocalyptic vision. Carl Degler remains cool. While he documents in great detail the step-by-step emancipation of women during the 19th century, he sees the transformation that has taken place in the family as holding as much promise as threat. If the family has lost most of its functions and is left with the task of providing "love, support to children and affection between spouses, it might be said that the modern family, unlike those of earlier ages, is for the first time free to perform its primary purposes without internal distraction." Degler seems to argue that less is more, for he explains that if the family has multiple tasks, "to be everything comes close to being nothing."

Despite the reduction in the number of functions of the modern American family, or perhaps because of it, Americans want to live in families. The United States has the highest marriage rate in the world. If the divorce rate is also rising, so is the remarriage rate. Degler agrees with Kingsley Davis that Americans "would rather risk a poor first marriage than to postpone marriage, and they would rather get a divorce early than to continue a bad marriage."

Contrary to the received wisdom that sees in the 19th century only the oppression of women, Degler shows that women have gained a measure of autonomy precisely in that century, and he also argues convincingly that the democratization of the family, the reduction in the birth rate, the gaining of legal rights and the vote have not weakened the family as the most important American institution. Yet lest it be objected that Degler is polyannaish in his outlook, the conclusion he arrives at will dispel this impression. Quite unexpectedly he takes the position that the interests of the family are at odds with the full emancipation of women—a view that explains the book's title. He concludes his historical analysis with the statement that "After two hundred years of development, both the future of the family and the fulfillment of women as persons are at odds as never before." This is because, he says, "the family is an anti-individualistic institution."

But is there any reason why an anti-individualistic institution cannot survive in an individualistic culture? On the contrary, as Degler argues, the family provides a welcome if not necessary change in pace and attitude in daily living. Difference does not imply incompatibility. One could argue to the contrary that behavior based on individualistic achievement could not survive without some measure of cooperation and emotional involvement as well, a capacity for which is both acquired and sustained in the family. What is incompatible is equality in a *patriarchal* family. Since Degler himself has shown that the American family has continuously been changing away from rigid patriarchy to companionship, it is not understandable

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that he would rest his argument on the belief that "*Democracy*, individualism, and meritocracy . . . are conspicuous by their absence from the family, even with its present modifications" (my emphasis). This conclusion is "odd," if I may borrow Degler's own term, because in the body of his book he has demonstrated that in the past the gains in women's individual rights have not confirmed the fears of those who opposed women's emancipation. I think Degler's own fears for the future derive from the fact that he equates "the family" with "the patriarchal family." While he is correct to state that up to now equality has not prevailed in the family, there is no reason why this could not be so in the future. As to "individualism and meritocracy," the fact that they contradict the normative structure of the family is precisely—and here Degler agrees with me—what makes it a desirable antidote to the psychological strains that have to be endured in living up to the values of the modern world.

The history of the last 200 years, Degler convincingly shows, has been one of increased equality between men and women in society at large and in the home as well. Already in the 18th century there was a new emphasis on affection in marriage—if love was not the basis of marriage, it would at least be a consequence of it. This led to an improvement in the position of women in marriage. By the 19th century, courtship became an important stage in family formation. True, the division of roles was rigid. A big change had taken place with regard to children who began to be seen as different from adults, and this led to the idealization of the mother who more and more became the sole rearer of children to the exclusion of the father. But as women's activities were increasingly confined to "her sphere," that is the care of children, the nurturing of the husband, and the maintenance of the home, women were also said to be the moral guardians of the home, and they took this assignment seriously. The "social feminists," as they called themselves, claimed the world as their home. They came out into the public arena with their writings, their church activities, their teaching and their social work. Although these activities kept women in their place in relation to men, they catapulted women out into the public even as they emphasized "the home" as a segregated sphere. Hence, they helped raise women's consciousness. Indeed, the first political movement dates from the middle of the century (the Seneca Falls meeting in 1848).

Three important facts stand out in the history of women's gains. The first is the sharp decline in fertility, what Degler calls "the demographic transition." The second is the fight for the vote. The third is the more recent influx of women into the labor force.

Writing about the demographic transition, Degler asks: Why was so much fuss made over the issue of abortion in the 19th century, especially after the Civil War, when fertility had already gone down ever since the American Revolution? Later in the book, talking about the suffrage fight, he asks again why so much fuss was made over giving women the vote when all through the century they had made gains in legal rights. The resistance by the public, including women, to both abortion and the vote, different as these phenomena are, can be explained by the same factor: both would permit women to make their individual decisions, and this was seen as a threat to the woman's expected subordination to her family.

The drop in fertility began long before there was any significant urbanization of industrialization in the country. Degler sees in this an indication of women's gain in autonomy because they more than anyone else have a personal interest in reducing the number of births. To be sure, men had a similar interest and so did society as a whole, but women had an interest in it as *women*—not as providers or landowners.

> For reasons that are still quite unclear, toward the end of the 18th century, individualism, consideration of one's own interest, began to be taken up by women. At bottom, it asserted or assumed that women, like men, had interests and lives that were separate and different in purpose from those of other members of the family.

The rise in abortion dates to about 1820. Degler points out that it is significant that this occurred just at the time when "the modern child-centered family, in which the woman was the moral guide and guardian, was establishing itself."

Thus women's emancipation, paradoxically, began precisely when the insistence on motherhood and the limitation of women to their own sphere put them in their place. If they were to devote themselves to the care and moral education of their children, fewer children would enable them to do a better job. The methods of birth control were several, though not easily accessible or safe, but there was one that could be performed by women on the basis of their decision alone: that was abortion. Increasingly as the century progressed the abortion rate went up. The practice was written about and condemned mainly by phy-

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sicians, but "All commentators on the extent of abortion in the 1850's and 1860's testified to the practice in all classes and particularly among married women." As a consequence, antiabortion laws were mainly passed after the Civil War, as the objection to abortion became widespread because the practice testified to women's individualistic ability to make decisions on their own behalf.

> One might say that simply because abortion was the assertion of woman's complete control over her body, at the expense of both child and husband, the 19th century could not condone it. Not even feminist women were yet far enough advanced in their assertion of women's individuality and self-interest to accept abortion—at least not in public. In private many women did assert that autonomy by simply having abortions even when they were illegal. But clearly it was a last resort, not an asserted right.

In contrast, the demand for the vote became a deliberate feminist issue, and one that was not to be won for a long time to come.

Degler raises the question why there was such a strong resistance to granting women the vote when throughout the century, beginning in 1840, there had been a steady improvement in the legal status of women even though it fell far short of equality. Women's participation in politics, in reform work, their increased presence in the public arena, makes it difficult to understand the long delay in the acceptance of women's suffrage. The reason for this seems to be the same as the one that caused the outrage over abortion. Women's right to vote would give every woman the *individual* right to express her opinion and to assert her own self-interest. Such independence would wreck our domestic institutions, it was feared. Only when the feminists abandoned their appeal in the name of individual rights, and argued instead that women had a special contribution to make as wives and homemakers on such issues as housing and welfare, did their appeal gain a following among both men and women. The vote, so it was now argued, would help extend women's special sphere rather than question women's place.

II

IN *Feminism and Suffrage*, Ellen Carol DuBois tells in detail about women's vain fight for the vote. While she does not speak of the change in the feminists' arguments, she points out that by the end of the century there was a switch in the suffragists' militancy from agitation to organizing, which forced them "to make important changes in their political style and content." Now, "organizing . . . acted as a brake on their radicalism." It was probably because they learned to communicate their ideas to wider audiences that they understood that they had to emphasize women's ability to deal with social issues rather than their individual rights.

DuBois's fine book is a recounting and analysis of the various political alliances the feminists had made over the years, usually to be disappointed either because of the allies' divergent interests or because women did not quite understand the constraints of politics. Before the Civil War they had been allied with the abolitionists. DuBois notes that "Women were so far outside the boundaries of the antebellum political community that the fact of their disenfranchisement, unlike that of blacks, was barely noticed." Like Degler, DuBois sees in the resistance to women's demands for the vote the fact that these were *at odds* with women's traditional subordination to the family, but DuBois goes farther. She sees clearly that the issue was not simply that women's demands threatened the family, but that they threatened the *patriarchal* family. She tells us that when John Adams considered the question, "Whence arises the right of men to govern the women without their consent?" he found the answer in men's power to feed, clothe, and employ women and therefore to make political decisions on their behalf. Thus DuBois concludes, "the demand that women be included in the electorate was not simply a stage in the expansion and democratization of the franchise. It was a particularly feminist demand, because it exposed and challenged the assumption of male authority over women."

After the Civil War, in their fight for the 14th Amendment, abolitionists abandoned their alliance with the women. From that time stems Wendell Phillips's famous statement, "As Abraham Lincoln said, 'One War at the time,' so I say, One question at a time. This hour belongs to the Negro."

After women lost their fight to be included in the 14th Amendment, they searched for other allies. Having been abandoned by the Republicans in their fight for the Negro vote, the women made the ill-fated decision to ally themselves with George Francis Train, "financier, eccentric and railroad promoter," who was a flamboyant racist and whose "attacks on the intelligence and integrity of black people were basic to his political arsenal." Later, women turned to the unions. It is worth recalling their alliance with the women typesetters who conducted a hard fight for recognition in the printers' union. The feminists did not

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understand the principle of union solidarity, while in turn union people did not share the feminists' better understanding of the sexual division of labor. Typical of the lack of understanding between middle-class women and unionists was Susan Anthony's behavior during a printers' strike in the winter of 1869, in which women compositors joined the male unionists. At the beginning of the strike, Anthony asked the employers' association to help establish a training school for women in typesetting, to which the employers immediately responded affirmatively. Thus one of the big issues regarding the admission of women to unions—that they are being used as strikebreakers—was indirectly and unwittingly supported by Susan Anthony (who later apologized for her *faux pas*). The alliance with the unions ended with the expulsion of Anthony in 1869 from the National Labor Congress and with the end of the Women's Typographical Union nine years later.

Women's enfranchisement would eventually take place, but not before 1920. It did not, as both Degler and DuBois confirm, lead to the radical changes that had been predicted by friend and foe but, as DuBois rightly says, the change in the relations between men and women was brought about more through the fight itself than by the fact of voting rights. This gain only confirmed what Degler demonstrates to have taken place all along during the 19th century: namely a profound transformation in the relations between men and women, one that had to wait another 40 to 50 years to become again the purpose of a new woman's movement.

As in the past, the new woman's movement arose on the coattails of the civil rights movement, but soon gained independence from it. The basis for it was, as Degler describes in great detail, women's massive participation in the labor force that had started during the war, and that continued through the '50s and thereafter. Although, as Degler also shows, women's work still is usually auxiliary to that of men, and women generally continue to see their primary role as that of homemakers, a new consciousness has imbued American women, whether or not they consider themselves part of the women's movement. I agree with William Chafe (see my review of his book, *The American Woman*, Spring 1973, and his article "Feminism in the 1970s," Fall 1974 *Dissent*) that not only will women's place never be the same again, but that a new consciousness continues to pervade American women. To believe Degler, women's emancipation may stop right here because it is at odds with the interests of the family. If Degler were to insert just one adjective—the word *patriarchal*—I would agree with him. The patriarchal family has been, I believe, under attack ever since the 19th century, as Degler so masterly demonstrates, and indeed the vote, even if it did not have the magical effect that foe and friend predicted, is symbolic of this transformation, as is the later event of women's participation in the labor force. The trend is unmistakable. □

Dick Howard

Theories of Class

MARXISM AND CLASS THEORY: A BOURGEOIS CRITIQUE, by Frank Parkin. New York: Columbia University Press. 217 pp. $17.50.

The chapter on class that concludes the third volume of *Capital* did not remain incomplete because Marx died at his desk. *Capital* presents the economic "anatomy of civil society" on the basis of a two-class model articulated by the relation to the means of production. Precapitalist remnants—be they such attitudes as racism or nationalism, or such modes of production as those of the artisan or the peasant—are swept away as capital fulfills its "civilizing mission." This explains capitalism's necessary economic crisis. If a crude determinism is to be avoided and political action to play a role, then a second, sociological class analysis that explains how the economically defined class becomes revolutionary must be added. The two levels cannot be identified mechanistically.

Lenin understood the theoretical problem of relating the economic and sociological class through politics. The party is to serve as mediator and catalyst. The danger, of course, is that the party will substitute itself for the class. This danger increases as Lenin inserts ever-shorter political periods into Marx's broad economic-historical sketch of capitalist development so that, finally, only the leader's sixth sense can foretell the moment when the revolutionary fusion is possible. The culmination of Leninism is the exiled Trots-

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ky's continual hectoring of the leadership for missing the golden moment when the iron was hot. "Trotsky's infatuation with the leadership problem," writes Parkin, "marked what could perhaps be seen as the culmination of a tendency within Marxism towards the progressive narrowing down of the social basis of the revolutionary agency." The result of this narrowing is the abandonment of the insistence on the necessity of socialism in favor of the "socialism or barbarism" thesis. At that point, as Parkin notes, "an apparent paradox in Marxist theory" was resolved, "namely, the combination of a doctrine of inevitable [economic] capitalist collapse with a rallying call to [sociologically based] political action to bring this end about." From proletariat to party to leader, to exhortation—such is the resolution of "how" to translate economic class into sociological reality.

As classical capitalism takes the form of neo, or late, or corporate, or monopoly, or state, or bureaucratic capitalism, the ambiguity in Marx's theory of class becomes more important. It wasn't too difficult in the 19th century to suppose a "civilizing tendency" toward class polarization that would eliminate precapitalist remnants. But today's new strata, classes, occupations, divisions cannot be categorized away by Marxists since their place has been carved out by capitalism's own development. Just as Lenin set Marx's economic categories into sociological motion by paying attention to consciousness, so his successors try to set these new socioeconomic categories a-dancing.

Confronted by what the more optimistic designate as "late" capitalism, Marxist sociology, according to Parkin, makes two false moves. The structuralism of Nicos Poulantzas attempts to refine the "boundary problem" that maps present-day capitalist stratification. Parkin's tongue-in-cheek refutation of this structuralism is vicious, and correct. One wonders how this French variant could have had the impact it seems to have. Structuralist Marxism doesn't explain "how" an economic class is transmuted into a sociological, and then revolutionary, political class. It simply assumes that the economic crisis will split society along structural fault lines, which the would-be revolutionary must know in advance in order to command the troops efficiently. When the second, structural sociological dodge—the thesis of the "relative autonomy of the state"—is added, Parkin has no trouble showing its ad hoc nature and the inconsistencies to which it leads. His own position is that if class theory is reformulated, reforms can be explained without recourse to this vague, "relative" third factor.

Before turning to Parkin's positive proposals, I should note that these occupy less than half of a book that seems unable to decide what it wants to do. At his best, Parkin is concerned that Marxism in all its variants is unable to deal with such phenomena as racism, sexism, or national and religious differences that divide the working class. But he is driven off course by his animus against structuralist Marxism (which, for some reason, he identifies as "Western Marxism" *tout court*). He goes further off course in lengthy historical accounts of Marxism's development since the Second International. When he returns to his track, it is usually through brief empirical accounts or references to, for instance, the Irish or South African or British situations. Although his prefatory remarks warn the reader not to expect a unified account, this reader at least was rather upset that Parkin didn't take the time to write a complete book. Jean Cohen's recent "System and Class: The Subversion of Emancipation" (in *Social Research*, Winter 1978), makes many of these critical points in a far more satisfactory way.

PARKIN WANTS to return class analysis to its pride of place. He adopts Weber's notion of "social closure" as the manner in which a group maximizes its rewards by restricting the access of others to resources and opportunities. Closure thus implies the exploitation of one group by another, and can be assimilated to the Marxian notion of class. *Exclusionary* closure is exercised in a downward direction; closure directed upward is defined as usurpationary. These two processes are said to exist in *all* stratified societies, although they are legitimated differently in each. Parkin follows Weber in defining capitalism not by the primacy of the relations of production but by its "rational commitment to values." But he does not follow the functionalist's Weber in denying the exclusionary

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role of private property. Private property in the means of production gives exclusionary power to a small group of owners; but it is only one of the exclusionary devices affecting today's life chances. Another modern form of private property that performs the same function is credentialism. The cultural capital legitimated by credentialism shares with productive capital a basic characteristic: state protection, a legal guarantee. Together, they compose the "dominant class under modern capitalism." They are the exclusionary class. Marx's two-class model, and his distinction between the propertied and the propertyless, is thus maintained without structuralist category-juggling.

Parkin claims that his reformulation can deal with forms of domination that escape Marxism's economic nets; and that it can explain divisions among the rulers that make reform possible. Class as closure can reproduce itself individually or collectively. Legal forms of exclusion can be instituted in terms of race, religion, sex, or party membership. Whites in South Africa, Protestants in Northern Ireland, males, or Party members can be the dominant or exclusionary class, no matter what their "relation to the means of production." But these forms of exclusion are collective. Modern capitalism emerged from a struggle against such collective exclusions in the form of kinship or lineage; it replaced them with Weber's "rational commitment to values." Exclusion thus took the individualist form of, for example, meritocratic testing. This, however, makes possible reforming tendencies within what Parkin calls the "liberal bourgeoisie." Once it is recognized, for example, that meritocratic testing still reproduces the cultural prejudices of lineage, the demand to replace procedural equality with equality of condition may arise. And this demand will be strengthened since, for the system as a whole, discrimination that prevents talent from rising is inefficient and harmful in the long run.

The usurpationary strategies employed by the excluded depend on whether discrimination is individual or collective. The 19th-century proletariat could use public actions, perhaps on the border of illegality, to oppose collective discrimination. Similar strategies were used by 20th-century civil rights and feminist campaigns. These strategies appeal to the moral-rational values of society's "dominant influentials." Their goals vary from redressment of immediate effects of discrimination to reform of the exclusionary devices themselves. Wage increases may be won or union rights extended. But what happens when the dominant form of social exclusion is individualistic? Parkin leaves us in the lurch, for reasons to which I will return in a moment.

Although he subtitles his book "a bourgeois critique," Parkin is clearly on the side of the excluded (for moral reasons, he repeatedly stresses, and not because of some inherent necessity of their triumph, as some Marxists would have it). What worries him are divisions and conflicts *within* that class. He explains these through the notion of "dual closure," whereby a section of the excluded class ensures itself a larger share by excluding in its turn another part of the class. Dual closure or exclusion by the excluded is frequently encountered in the history of the working-class movement. Although this closure can be individualist (hiring of relatives, and so forth), it is usually collectively based on factors like race, sex, or religion.

Parkin insists that "dual closure" represents a "rational" response by the excluded and not simply a ploy by the state to divide the dominated class. Phenomena like "white backlash" can be explained by his categories. When the doubly excluded blacks resort to collective usurpationary tactics they will draw sympathy from the "liberal bourgeoisie" who "far from . . . reaping any political benefit from a communally divided working class, as Marxists would claim . . . dwell upon the dysfunctions of this arrangement and the technical and moral superiority of a more rationally ordered class system based purely upon individualist exclusion." If the result is elimination of the barriers excluding the black community, one can expect to see a "blacklash" since the whites will have lost their supplementary compensations. Parkin's point is that class analysis can account for working-class division, and for reform, without appeal to the *deus ex machina* of the "relative autonomy" of the state.

THE QUESTION IS whether Parkin's sociological class analysis is the necessary complement to Marx's economic class theory, or whether it is a replacement of it. Parkin's classes act according to a rational perception of their own interests, whereas Marx's are driven by an underlying necessity. One of Parkin's empirical illustrations is useful here. The growing usurpationary strength of the British working class has troubled those sociologists used to a deferent and "mature" trade union organization. Parkin rejects nicely the "almost Parsonian faith in the binding force of normative constraints," and suggests that deference had been

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the rational result of powerlessness, but that this powerlessness no longer exists. More capital-intensive production increases the potential damage from industrial action, inclining management to settle more quickly. The increasing complexity of the division of labor means that key groups can stop the whole process. And so on, until one gets the impression that Parkin realized that his sociological account had gone so far that, bereft of any material underpinnings, he suddenly found himself in need of the economically driven class actor once again.

The difference between Marx and Parkin, which makes the one a revolutionary and the other a "bourgeois," is that Marx tried to show how the situation of the economic class would drive the sociological class to action. Parkin's model of class claimed to reproduce Marx's division of the propertied and propertyless without recourse to the relation to the means of production. This may work for sociological analysis, but mere classification was not Marx's goal. Marx's revolutionary class was composed of *workers*, whereas Parkin's excluded are rational, interest-calculating competitors in the marketplace. A nondeterminist, noneconomist reading of Marx is still possible.

Parkin is certainly right in criticizing the inadequacies of the Marxist sociology of class. The problem of *how* the economic class is transmuted sociologically into a revolutionary class is crucial for a nonmechanical reading. Another aspect of Marx's analysis, ignored by Parkin, may help. The "civilizing influence" of capital need not be understood merely materialistically as producing more commodities, nor need it be viewed with Weber as an increase of calculating rationality. Marx also thought that capitalism created new, radical *needs*. In a long discussion of Heller's *The Theory of Needs in Marx* (in *Telos*, Fall 1977), Jean Cohen distinguishes between interests and needs. Interests, as Albert Hirschman shows in *The Passions and the Interests*, emerge as the dominant human passion with capitalist development. A calculating economic rationality that ensures the private self-control necessary for public social control is privileged over the other needs. Capitalism reproduces itself by transforming the *new needs* of which Marx spoke into economic *interests* that the system can then satisfy. The implication is that the economic *or* the sociological class becomes a revolutionary political class when its economic interests are *re*translated into radical human needs. This translation is the task of politics.

When Parkins turns to politics in his last chapter, he does not apply his own sociological model, for reasons that are never made clear. His argument is a descriptive-historical (replete with sardonic asides) account of the transition problem to which I referred at the outset. Little that is new is advanced. Parkin mocks the naive expectation that after the revolution people will be too absorbed in "the fascinating arts of self-realization to bother unduly with anything as squalid and divisive as the pursuit of material interest." He recalls Trotsky's proposal to militarize the trade unions, and scoffs at the "dialectical" difference between shooting workers at Peterloo and at Kronstadt. To Lenin's "democracy for the poor" he opposes (with little argument) Rawls's enlarging the share of the least rewarded. Finally, we are told that "Marxism operates with the concept of the good society; social democracy with the concept of the not-as-bad-as-it-might-be society." But even this is not the end of it.

Parkin offers no theoretical grounds for his defense of social democracy. Indeed, he is often critical of its self-justifications. He recognizes the practical problems of its "salami tactics," and criticizes its argument that private property is the basis and guarantee of an "open society." He recalls the weaknesses and insipid programmatic realizations of those Social Democratic regimes that have governed, and cites their example against present-day disciples. His ultimate justification for this option is that the working class is "rational" enough, has experienced enough, to doubt the claims of revolutionary Marxism to do better next time.

Parkin's book is a contribution to sociology (and to Marxism) insofar as it poses sharply the problem of the relation between the economic and the sociological concepts of class. But the contribution is limited to sociology, and therefore limited. Parkin tries to unify the economic and the sociological through the device of the rational interest-seeking class. He thus remains at the level classically called civil society—where this unity exists anyway. What he misses, and what Marx also missed, is the domain proper to politics. This is why Parkin is as critical of the illusions of social democracy as he is of those of revolutionary Marxism. A third level of analysis is necessary, that of politics. In the last analysis, Parkin's critique is "bourgeois" because it is apolitical; politics remains epiphenomenal, just another form of interest calculation. Perhaps the effort of unifying his book would have driven him to reflect further. As it stands, the book is only a beginning. □

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LETTERS

Mistaken Identity

Editors:

Permit me to point out an error in fact in Jean Bloch-Michel's article "Anti-Semitism and the French Right" (Summer 1980). Lucien Goldmann was neither a "former anarchist" nor was he killed by the neofascist Police Honor. He was a Marxist sociologist and he died peacefully in 1970.

Rather, it was Pierre Goldman, author of *Souvenirs obscurs d'un Juif polonais né en France*, contributor to the left-wing daily *Liberation*, and collaborator on Sartre's *Les Temps Modernes*, who was killed while on his way to visit his wife in a maternity hospital. As Bloch-Michel said, though he was killed in broad daylight Goldman's killers were never found. But 10,000 people followed his body to Père-Lachaise cemetery.

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Brooklyn, N.Y. □

Again: Marx and the Jews

Editors:

This is a response to Joseph Clark's "Marx and the Jews: Another View" (*Dissent*, Winter 1981), which was motivated by my "Marx and the Jews" (Fall 1979).

Normally I would not answer Joseph Clark's "other view," because he does not refute any of my contentions. But he has slandered a man to whom we owe respect and gratitude, and I must defend here Franz Mehring. It was Mehring who first shouted "foul" to Marx's unfair epithets directed at Ferdinand Lassalle. Mehring had many Jewish friends (among others, Rosa Luxemburg) and at all times condemned anti-Semitism. On December 6, 1893—that is, some time after his conversion to Marxism, which, Clark says, turned him into an anti-Semite—he wrote in the *Neue Zeit* (the foremost socialist weekly of the time):

> Court preacher Stoecker is traveling around the country peddling the witty [*geistreich*, a denigrating epithet] assertion that "the Jews" Marx and Lassalle had attacked king and fatherland in order to divert the attention of the masses from the stock exchange

About another anti-Semitic demagogue, Ahlwardt, Mehring wrote in 1892, the year from which Clark quotes his "anti-Semitic" utterance:

> Anti-Semitism as practiced by . . . [here he names some well-known big capitalists] originates in sheer jealousy of Jewish capital. But the mass movement of anti-Semitism reflects the narrow-minded resistance of the petty-bourgeoisie against the rage of big capital. Its core is social misery. Peasants and craftsmen and lower civil servants are its recruits; small owners are desperately wrestling with big capital. This explains those symptoms of anti-Semitic agitation that often seem so strange. It also explains the fact that anti-Semitic agitators are such dubious characters, not only politically but almost always morally, too. [*Neue Zeit*, vol. 11, p. 547.]

In his classical monograph "Rehearsal for Destruction" (in *Studies in Prejudice*, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, 1949), Paul Massing devoted a full chapter to "The Case of Franz Mehring," and concluded that "no Marxist journalist or historian made "the repulsive spectacle of anti-Semitism" so often the point of departure for a criticism of capitalist society as he did." But Massing added: "No other writer so consistently combined his attacks on anti-Semitism with sarcastic comments on philo-Semites" (p. 184).

Mehring had reasons to complain about the liberal philo-Semitic establishment in Berlin, which had hounded him out of the editorial office of the *Volkszeitung*, but even before this experience and long before he had turned Marxist, he had attacked the Jewish press mogul Sonnemann (*Frankfurter Zeitung*) for mixing business with news interests. He was never a man to flinch from an issue, and he boldly criticized "the participation of the more mischievous elements of Berlin's Jews in bogus stock swindles," in the railway scandal and other embarrassing ventures that resulted "in deep animosity against the Jewish character among the cultured groups of Berlin society. . . . Whoever denies this has not spent the last ten years in Berlin." (*Herr Hofprediger Stoecker*, 1882). The last quotation is from the period before Mehring's conversion to Marxism (of which Clark says that then Mehring was "simply humanitarian"); the first quotation was from his Marxist period (Clark says that Mehring here defended the anti-Semitic agitator Adolf Stoecker).

But Joseph Clark has it wrong. In 1892 Mehring was writing as a civil libertarian; Stoecker had lost his position as court preacher because of his political activity, largely through the influence of the liberal philo-Semitic establishment, and while Mehring continued to attack Stoecker politically, he deplored the circumstances of his fall. In taking this attitude he did exactly what Aryeh Neier and the ACLU have done in supporting the Nazi march through Skokie (an attitude endorsed by several *Dissent* editors in a controversy [Spring 1979] in these pages). Both placed the formal rights of the murderer above the substantive protection of his victims. I may call Neier a self-flagellating Jew and a spineless liberal, but not an anti-Semite. Mehring deserves this epithet still less, since he was writing at a time when no Social Democrat could be an upper-echelon civil servant or a tenured professor.

Mehring understood, better than most Marxists, that

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anti-Semitism had deep roots, and therefore he did not think that the disgrace of Stoecker would stop it; indeed, an even more rabid demagogue arose at once, in the person of Hermann Alwardt.

Moreover, in 1891 the Conservative party inserted an anti-Semitic plank into its program, and in 1896 no fewer than 16 candidates running as "anti-Semites" were elected, a number not reached again until 1924. Three best-selling novels were dealing with the passing of noblemen's estates into the hands of Jewish speculators, and the Panama scandal and some stock exchange affairs brought Jewish names to public notice—and then came the affair of the "Jewish rifles." Ahlwardt, who was an investigative reporter, had uncovered the fact that faulty rifles had been supplied to the German army by one Israel Löwi, and concluded that a Jewish conspiracy tried to "emasculate" the German defense. This charge ballooned, and it was discovered that inspection officers had taken bribes although the rifles were usable. Mehring was delighted; he wrote four long articles, chiding Ahlwardt for his demagoguery and charging that by denouncing the Jews he had shielded the corrupt officers. His Enemy Number One was always the Prussian "System."

I wish I could spare my friend Joe Clark the next correction. He charges that Mehring misrepresented the motives of Heinrich Marx, Karl's father, in embracing Christianity—"the ticket of admission to polite society," Heine had said in his mocking tone. Alas, this was not true only in the crude sense of "bread" but still more in a cultural sense. With the only exception of Moses Mendelssohn (whom Mehring duly mentions in his work on Lessing), all Jews who made a contribution to German letters before 1860 were baptized: Heine, Börne, Gans, Neander, Rahel Varnhagen, Dorothea Schlegel, Fanny Lewald, Marx, Lassalle. Heinrich Marx could have retained his title of *Justizrat* (a mere visiting-card matter, which however mattered in title-crazy Prussia) and could have earned his "bread" as a lawyer (though he could not be a civil servant except by special decree) without converting to Christianity. But as Mehring and also McClellan (Clark's witness) point out, there was no liberal synagogue in all of Prussia, and the only alternative to Jewish orthodoxy was the enlightened Protestant faith of Lessing: Heinrich Marx's conversion reflects his advanced convictions. Clark would rather see him converted for exclusively opportunistic reasons, but Mehring still followed the honor code of German intellectuals according to which such an insinuation would have been utterly disrespectful. I feel that Mehring here comes off with flying colors.

As to Joseph Clark's quotations from Heinrich Heine, I have to disappoint him. He should read Heine's pamphlet aimed against Börne or the *Confessions*. He will find that where Marx speaks of "long-nosed Jews and evil smell," Heine uses the same words; where Marx says "sewers," Heine wonders from which "Polish cloaca" a certain Jew had emerged; where Marx fulminates against usurers, Heine knows "stores where one can buy below factory price and still be fleeced"; in short, like Mehring, Heine thought that "both the rabbi and the monk stink." People were talking in the language of their age. Can one hold Shylock against Shakespeare or *The St. Matthew Passion* against Bach?

In my essay I tried to make a distinction between the low social esteem in which Jews had to live 150 years ago and *political* anti-Semitism. Of course, after the Holocaust, one has become sensitive to all expressions of prejudice. But here precisely I find a contradiction in the criticism that Jews level at Marx: they charge that he did not care for Jews as Jews; in fact Clark charges, in his last paragraphs, that Marx was not a Zionist. How unhistorical! Zionism, like anti-Semitism, did not arise before the end of the 19th century.

Marx, on the contrary, denied the existence of racial differences, and of all national differences. He may have been mistaken; he may have underestimated the power of nationalism. But given the framework of his thinking, one cannot hold his idealism against him. Since he denied all fatherlands and nations—why should he have paid allegiance to one that, then, had not yet been claimed in modern, national terms? His greatness was expressed in the utopia that all exclusiveness would be abolished—why should he have sponsored the exclusiveness of one people?

POSTCRIPT: When I wrote my article on "Marx and the Jews" I did not know that Helmut Hirsch, a respected Marx scholar formerly at the International Institute for the History of the Labor Movement in Amsterdam, had just published a book on the same question. Not only to complete the bibliography should attention be drawn to this very exhaustive study, but because it makes a number of important points.

The first point had been made earlier by Hal Draper but is here pursued with penetrating ingenuity: CUI BONO? What purpose did Marx have in mind, whom did he wish to support and whom did he wish to challenge when he wrote the famous essay on "The Jewish Question"? By perusing carefully the correspondence and other expressions of the circle of Marx's friends (going so far as to compare the passages they had marked in their books and to point out imprecise citations) Hirsch has become convinced that Marx and Bauer had quarreled over precisely the Jewish question, when Bauer had maintained that emancipation was impossible and Marx that emancipation was necessary.

Second, Hirsch argues that the strange references to America in the essay serve a strategic function: here was a Christian country that nevertheless was given over completely to *Schacher* (bargaining, haggling, commercialism), and Marx quotes Tocqueville to that effect. In the country of purely capitalistic culture the so-called Jewish spirit of money worship can be seen as being practiced not only by honorable Christian gentlemen but even by clergymen. America also shows that emancipation—separation of state and church—is perfectly practical. These are the main theses of the essay.

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Third, Hirsch admits, not without indicating his revulsion, that Marx used dirty language against many friends behind their backs, among them those expressions that have been called anti-Semitic and that betray also racial bias against Negroes and Slavs.

But Hirsch has also collected a long list of passages in which Marx shows compassion for and solidarity with Jews. In fact, the article in which he describes the plight of the Jerusalem Jews is one of the few where this very unsentimental writer rises to chords of moving plaint. The small volume *Marx and Moses* (181 pp., Frankfurt: Peter D. Lang, 1980—as vol. 2 of the series "*Judentum und Umwelt*") is full of Marxological gems since the author has made it his business to read every book from which Marx ever quoted and knows as much about what Marx left out as others know about what he said.

HENRY PACHTER

JOSEPH CLARK Replies:

The most important thing I can say about Henry Pachter's rejoinder is what a loss his death has been to all of us. He was a distinguished scholar and a tough-minded thinker.

I have a few brief comments about his reply. I agree heartily with the characterization of Paul Massing's *Rehearsal for Destruction* as a classical monograph. In that volume the reader will find the documents that describe the differences between the Mehring before and after he became a Marxist, with respect to anti-Semitism. Massing writes (p. 313):

> Mehring's development illustrates the impact of the revolutionary theory on the evaluation of political anti-Semitism. The pre-Marxist Mehring saw in Stoecker a miserable and dangerous demagogue. Mehring the Marxist appraised Stoecker as almost a second Luther. The early Mehring feared the effects anti-Jewish rabble-rousing might have on the Jewish group. Later, Mehring no longer believed that there was a Jewish problem; nor that anti-Semitism was actually directed against the Jews. The phenomenon interested him exclusively as a manifestation of the class struggle.

Massing then quotes extensively from the 1882 Mehring article, which sharply criticizes Stoecker's anti-Semitism; this he contrasts with the 1892 Mehring in the *Neue Zeit* who deplores the liberal press attacks against Stoecker's anti-Semitism and cites Mehring's praise for Stoecker's proletarian origins, which may still lead him "to see what we have long since recognized in the light of socialist knowledge."

As to Heine, his life and work reveal many spirited attacks against the Jew-haters and frequent defense of Jews under attack by anti-Semites; though there are also anti-Jewish slurs. In Marx there is the latter, not the former. □

The Self-Inflicted Wound

Editors:

In his essay on the 1980 election in the Winter 1981 issue, Irving Howe evokes the analogy of a traffic accident. While I agree with most of what Howe says, the analogy that appeals to me is the self-inflicted wound. Reagan and the Republican party did not win, Carter and the Democratic party lost. Moreover, Carter and the Democrats deserved to lose. The incumbent party not only failed to ameliorate the domestic and international problems that burden the nation, it allowed many to become worse. To its suffering followers, the party could not even admit its failures. All it could do was offer a misery-worn public four more years of the most incompetent Democratic president to burden the White House and the nation in the 20th century. The public said no, and who could blame them.

The public's negative vote certainly did not give Reagan a mandate to turn the clock back. Almost half the eligible electorate (47 percent) did not even bother to vote. This Apathy party was composed primarily of young people, minorities, and blue-collar workers. These natural supporters of the Democratic party opted out because they saw no viable alternatives. Most among the minority of the total electorate who did vote for Reagan would have found it difficult to list any of the policies he advocated—though they consisted mostly of a series of simple applause lines. But the public did know that Carter has failed miserably, and they were willing to support any alternative they did not outright have to fear. Reagan, simple, amiable, even a little fatherly, finally convinced them to ignore all those nutty things the press had been claiming he had said. Trust Ronnie, he pleaded. Desperate for relief, millions decided it was worth the chance.

Nor did the election indicate that the public wanted a reduction in government programs and services. The American public is schizophrenic on this topic. Ask the public if government should be smaller, and they will generally say yes. Ask them if the government should help the public obtain medical care, see that everyone has a job, aid the cities, solve the energy crisis, and they will generally say yes, too. This is almost as true of those who identify themselves as conservatives as it is of those who classify themselves as moderates and liberals. The public tends to be ideologically conservative or moderate, but programmatically liberal. The day when people want their own government services cut, that day I will believe that the public wants less government.

You may ask, If that's true, why did the people vote against so many liberal incumbents? I see two reasons. First, because they were a part of the party that failed; they were guilty by association. Second, because the public is schizophrenic about our government. People really do yearn for less government; but, of course, not if they have to give up anything themselves.

You can bet that if medical costs continue to rise, unemployment remains high, cities continue to decay,

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the public will expect Reagan to ameliorate these problems. If he does not, he will be dismissed, just as Carter was. Reagan's simple ideas will look awfully silly when he is burdened with complex problems he clearly does not understand. Yet had Carter been reelected, he would have failed just as badly. Our major problems—energy, inflation, unemployment, productivity and monopoly—are most serious and complex, but neither major party seems to comprehend that we are past the tinker-and-patchwork stage.

The reactionaries among Reagan's followers will be a real threat to labor, minorities, the poor and the middle class. They may be able to hamstring or even roll back some of the civil rights laws, and they may win some victories over labor, conservationists, and consumers. But the hard-core right-wing people are in for a very bitter experience. Having finally elected their darling, they will find that he will now abandon most of them and their policies, and will fail to implement most of those measures he did support.

The victories the reactionaries will win will not be easy to live with but may be a godsend. Millions of Americans, including minorities and the working class, have become complacent; a few years of the Reagan administration should wake up a lot of people. Senator Hatch now suggests that construction costs be lowered by reducing construction workers' salaries. Strom Thurmond wants to repeal the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Jessie Helms intends to cut back on Food Stamps. Representatives Walker (R.-Pa.) and Ashbrooke (R.-Ohio) campaign to gut what is left of affirmative action.

Such actions should stimulate the complacent to reenter the political arena. This new mobilization, along with Reagan's predictable failures, will provide the Democratic party with an excellent opportunity to reestablish itself. The democratic left must be ready to play a role in helping the party take advantage of these opportunities.

HARRELL RODGERS
Houston, Texas □

NOTEBOOK *(continued from page 220)*

followers far in excess of those stated in the Koran or by the Prophet. The clergy used its unique position to gradually amass much wealth as a corporate group in the form of guardianship of religious endowments. As a consequence, the religious class in 19th-century Iran attained the same kind of unchallenged spiritual power once held by it in pre-Islamic Iran. Like their Sasanian predecessors, they claimed to be upholders of the true religion and the medium through which the individual believer could attain salvation. Even the Qajar rulers, who during the 125 years in power never managed to establish effective control, often grudgingly had to pay homage to them, at least publicly.

It is no wonder that Iranians began to be considered heretics by the Sunni and, especially, by the Arabic-speaking Muslims, who found this and other interpretations totally contrary to the spirit and teachings of pristine Islam. During most of the 20th century, however, the Iranian clergy did not fare well. The spread of Western education and the rise of a strong central power under the two Pahlavi rulers beginning in 1925 were unfavorable to the clergy. The first Pahlavi, following in Ataturk's footsteps, tried to curb clerical power, and the second attempted to gradually contain their authority. Reza Shah tried to create a secular state, and his son Mohammed Reza, although at first conciliatory toward the clergy, made similar efforts to dilute their power and eradicate their hold on the masses. This explains the fury that has been unleashed against both the intelligentsia and the Pahlavi kings by the official clergy, who have made masterly use of religious symbolism in denouncing their enemies and in their grab for power.

However, their direct hold of power now also sets them up for blame as well as praise. Though their use of shibboleths, such as "The Satan, the Pahlavis, and the U.S.," was effective in solving some problems, they have also to present to their followers a positive balance sheet that will justify their claim to ordination by God as both spiritual and temporal rulers of the people. Although it may be difficult for the masses to throw off a yoke placed upon them in the name of God, they will eventually question why the rewards under this bond are so meager. When this reckoning comes, as the fallen shah discovered, the masses can be fickle.

The clergy's claim to leadership of the community is also bound to be challenged by the thousands of educated, idealistic youths, who in their disenchantment with solutions of Western origin have turned instead to Islam in the hope of finding their Utopia. Many of these youths turn more and more to the source of Muslim ideas, the Koran and the less polluted Islam of the orthodox Muslims. This process will require time, if outside interference does not bring about an abortive overthrow of the clergy. In the meantime, it is interesting to see how history has repeated itself after the passage of nearly 13 centuries. □

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Bernard Avishai

Breaking Faith

Commentary and the American Jews

In 1963, the young editor of *Commentary*, Norman Podhoretz, astonished his readers by appealing for "the wholesale merging of the races in the United States"—ending racism through "miscegenation." His article, "My Negro Problem—and Ours," seemed the more remarkable since, to secure the premise that too much hatred attaches to color for civil integration ever to succeed, Podhoretz confessed to the fear, envy, and contempt with which he had grown up in Brooklyn under the siege of "Negro gangs." Those streets still seemed to him world-historical ground:

> There is a fight, they win, and we retreat, half whimpering, half with bravado. My first nauseating experience with cowardice. And my first appalled realization that there are people in the world who do not seem to be afraid of anything, who act as though they have nothing to lose.

In retreat with him were other young American Jews, barely digesting their parents' veiled reports of catastrophe abroad and also faring badly against the fascinating brutes on the block.

His own packs, or so Podhoretz insisted, could not be ruthless to the end. But Negroes would play hooky, swallow candy, and hit you in the face; Italians had surrendered only somewhat less to the state of nature. Such imaginings of Jews and gentiles may have been gleaned more from the new literary life—from, say, Saul Bellow's novels—than from memory: our own Louis Lepke, "Bugsy" Siegel, and "Gurrah" Shapiro are not so easy to forget. Nevertheless, Podhoretz seemed not to think his recollections just embellishments of some firmer cultural identity: his primal identity as a Jew meant getting pushed around. In fact, Podhoretz's "Negro problem" now seems most revealing when viewed as but a complication of "our" Jewish one, of our lack of positive reasons for Judaism's survival, which is something he wanted to concede in the article despite his old gang's defiance: "In thinking about the Jews, I have often wondered whether their survival as a distinct group was worth the hair on the head of a single infant."

Why survive indeed if, say, the Jews' "dark and surly" foils took his advice, married whites—among whom, as a matter of "duty," Podhoretz refused to exclude his own children—and melted into the pot? Could the Jews then claim to be holding back just to nurse the discontents of civility? Besides, ruthlessness could not have seemed all that unkosher to the "precocious" writer who, in *Making It* just four years later, announced that the world's choices resolved into giving orders or taking them, grasping for money or having none, getting fame or dying in obscurity. Podhoretz was understandably vexed: "I think I know why the Jews once wished to survive (though I am less certain as to why we still do): they not only believed that God had given them no choice, but were tied to a

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memory of past glory and a dream of imminent redemption." He thought it unnecessary to add that his own cohorts are not bound in this way. They are now afflicted with choices, not the least of them how—or whether—to make something out of Jewish origins once in Manhattan, away from the Manichaean street fights of an immigrant childhood.

I: Inventing American Jews

Far from being discreditable, Podhoretz's reservations about the point of Jewish survival in America seemed to drive him, and *Commentary*, into a unique position of Jewish cultural leadership. The magazine succeeded brilliantly as a force for American Jewish life, especially from 1963 to 1968, because its gifted editor consciously charged it with the eclectic voice to which, he knew, thousands of educated, ambiguous American Jews could respond. Like Podhoretz, such people were "neither especially religious nor much Zionist" but were strongly drawn to the divided ambitions and political tragedies of our parents and grandparents, of our European relatives haunting us in snapshots. We had no corporate loyalties apart from the abstract obligations of citizenship, yet as individuals knew we had in common the moral confusions of being Jews. So we keenly awaited *Commentary* every month as if it were a public realm in which Jews were permitted to live on the questions.

These were good questions and the magazine treated them with deliberate skill, organizing the intellectual standards of the American Jews' increasingly suburban and attenuated communities. *Commentary* established itself as our mail-order polity; one could, it seemed, be actively Jewish just by reading about the Jews' history, debating the place in culture of Jewish ritual law, or discerning the American "emancipation" in the elegance of the magazine's prose. And one could hope to be a good Jew by writing with virtuosity about issues that were on our minds. If such sentiments were vain, the pretentions to leadership of the Conservative and Reform rabbinate seemed far more so. Only *Commentary* seemed to demand that American Jews put the record of historic Jews on our cluttered cultural agenda, and this when the practice of historical analysis—research, publish, debate—already seemed to surpass in virtue the Halachic obligations no one (who was anyone) was willing to fake.

I've been rereading the volumes published during Podhoretz's early years at *Commentary* and I'll review, briefly, the apparent purposes of his editorial leadership. This seems necessary since, in spite of its greater conspicuousness, the magazine has not been generating much enthusiasm among Jewish intellectuals in recent years, which probably accounts for its declining number of subscribers—60,000 in 1970, 38,500 today. Consider, for example, *Commentary*'s response to American Jewish writing in the '60s. It did not merely publish criticism of new novels and stories by American Jewish authors, it also provided them with an established forum to try out new material. Saul Bellow, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and Bernard Malamud each published new fiction during those years, as did younger writers as wildly different as Elie Wiesel and Mordecai Richler. Moreover, the pages were rife with responses and attacks by equivocally Jewish novelists who, while not publishing original fiction here, used the magazine to clarify their critical strategies: Philip Roth, for example, first defended his depictions of Jewish aggression here, in an essay that was itself a bright attack on bond-dinner heroes. Norman Mailer wrote a series of idiosyncratic exegeses on Martin Buber's newly published Hasidic Tales.

The magazine indulged such writers, took them to express the most original inventions of American Jewish experience. Podhoretz would later acknowledge that, anyway, the writing of Mailer, Roth, Bellow, and others was "culturally all the rage in America"; but trendiness could not account for the care with which *Commentary* charted its development and subjected it to the criticism of writers

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whose essays were themselves reasons for raised expectations about "Jewish" possibilities in America. Irving Howe wrote regularly, covering even the opening of a play, *Fiddler on the Roof*. Other regular critics were Alfred Kazin, George Steiner, Theodore Solotaroff, and Lionel Abel, as well as more senior members of Podhoretz's "Family," Lionel Trilling and William Phillips. *Commentary* also was giving a start to Robert Alter. Of course, Steiner's pieces were very different from Howe's: the former was claiming to see "Judaism" plain between the lines of Western European humanist philosophy, while the latter might write to evoke the values and materials of East European Yiddish culture, enjoining "dignified silence" from those incapable of mourning it with him. Very different voices, and their juxtaposition neatly made Podhoretz's point.

No less, pluralism characterized the magazine's approach to theological matters even when this required a good deal of moral courage. In the July 1963 issue, for example, Marc Galanter wrote a passionate dissent on the case of Brother Daniel, the Carmelite monk of Jewish origin to whom the Israeli Supreme Court had denied "Jewish nationality"—an important legal designation in Israel—because he had converted to Catholicism during the war. Arguing that the Orthodox center could no longer hold the Jews' "spiritual dispersion," Galanter charged that the court's verdict seemed to repudiate the new Jewish world the Zionists had themselves helped to create:

> The Jews have developed an identity much richer than a religion, a nation, or a culture—a kind of brotherhood through history that crosses unprecedented barriers. . . . No Jew or group of Jews is able to partake of all of it. The complexities of this heritage should not be reduced to the more manageable or presentable dimensions of nationality or religion, but should be kept open to the complexities of our changing experience—including the enrichments of such Jews as Brother Daniel.

Surely, Galanter—and Podhoretz—would also want to keep that heritage open even to various enrichments of the Upper West Side.

Those enrichments appeared in *Commentary* as philosophical arguments and theological styles. Martin Buber wrote about the Hasidic masters while Gershom Scholem published his initial research on the "false" messianism of the Kabbalists. Leo Strauss published 12 terse pages of "introductory reflections" on the distinctions to be derived from Judaism and Hellenism, while Hans Jonas needed less space to pose, in a stunning polemic, the tensions between Jewish- and Christian-inspired ethics, and the contributions of both to the Western tradition. Not that the Western tradition was always assumed to be precious: *Commentary* published pieces by the Marxist Albert Memmi, the Freudian rabbi Richard Rubenstein, and others who were inclined to give it a rough ride. The point is that *Commentary* aimed to achieve some consistency between American Jewish identity and the actual, various voices of American Jews: however inimical the concept of a Western tradition seemed to the Orthodox Jewish one—Leo Strauss had frankly posed these as options—the magazine could not pretend to deny the blandishments of the West at a time when most of its writers and readers were resorting to the categories and analytic methods of Western social science and cultural criticism. It was in this spirit, to take yet another example, that the anthropologist Erich Isaac considered the "enigmas" of circumcision and the dietary laws.

This is not to say that traditional Jewish modes of argument were excommunicated. The exegetic tradition was represented in Midrashic essays by Emil Fackenheim, Robert Alter, and Milton Himmelfarb—all trained as rabbis yet obviously devoted to secular philosophic learning—who provided our best view of former Rabbinic standards during the Haskalah, the period of the Jewish Enlightenment. But Orthodoxy was not, it is true, given authoritative prominence. On the contrary, so much prophesy in one magazine—as if Judaism were a load of texts dropped at the feet of highly individual critics—struck the yeshiva masters of Flatbush and Mount Royal as profound heresy. Yet the under-

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standable outrage of the Orthodox community seemed a risk worth running: from the play of Mailer or, somewhat later, Harold Bloom issued our otherwise unlikely reexamination of those texts, of Torah and Talmud, Midrash, and Hebrew language. For Americans of Jewish origin, prophecy seemed not to be the culmination of traditional learning but its first step.

Another reason *Commentary* was getting Judaism the respectful attention of intellectuals was the hard-headed, exacting way Podhoretz acquired articles on Jewish history. Avoiding martyrological apologia, Podhoretz published pieces that displayed the Jews as people who could also confound themselves by vain hopes, failing ideologies, and malice. I have already mentioned the magazine's publication of Scholem's work on the movements of Jewish mystics; he also wrote about the Jews of Germany in *Commentary*, and with the measured and distant compassion of one who had made a once painful and misunderstood choice: leaving Berlin for Palestine. His work, like that of Cecil Roth on the biblical period and of Arthur Hertzberg on the modern, corresponded to what seemed an overt editorial injunction against "sentimentalizing the Jews," depicting them in Robert Alter's phrase as "a continuing parade of holy sufferers, adepts of alienation, saintly buffoons, flamboyant apostles of love." So where Yigal Yadin would be asked to proffer the political Zionist symbolism of Masada, H. R. Trevor-Roper was invited to challenge the simple-minded lessons from which, he thought, so much of modern Jewish nationalism derived.

Commentary's approach to the Jews' literary, legal, and historical products had a profound political impact on thousands of young Jewish students and scholars. It seemed to us not merely refreshing to recognize historic Jews as participating agents of their fate; this also inspired a good deal of timely action. In Montreal, for instance, a number of Jewish students (among them Ruth Wisse, and, several years later, myself) worked to establish a pilot program in Jewish Studies at McGill University—by challenging both the existing priorities of local Jewish philanthropies and the high-minded resistance of McGill's academic committees. I do not think it an exaggeration to say that in our mind's eye was the example of *Commentary*'s writers, the lure of emulating its subversions and reconstructions of Jewish life by standards worthy of our academies. I doubt that this experience in Montreal was unique: dozens of similar groups sprung up at other colleges and universities during the late '60s. Their faculties have, by now, virtually eclipsed the rabbinate as the arbiters of Jewish moral life in America.

I think *Commentary*'s influence on American Jewish practice during the 1960s may itself be put in some historical perspective and usefully compared with the cultural Zionist monthlies in, say, Odessa during the 1890s; the first time the people of the book, coming to a modern city, became the people of the magazine. But *Commentary*'s record in the '60s corresponds to the Zionist monthlies in another crucial respect since, like the cultural Zionists, *Commentary* supposed that historic Jews' communitarian traditions, their moral standards issuing from lapsed theology and collective vulnerability, make Jews natural candidates for modernism, scientific discourse, for "progress" in politics. I'll not recapitulate here the politics of such Zionists as Achad Haam and his disciple Chaim Weizmann, nor do I mean to press the analogy with *Commentary*'s newer Jews too hard since the Zionists would not have viewed with favor attempts to modernize Jewish life in any language but Hebrew. Still, it seems revealing that in turn both Jewish intelligentsias, distant in time and space, took for granted a tradition with incipient political commitments to democratic tolerance, peace, and social improvement. *Commentary* during the '60s took social action to be the vocation in America of people who might preserve what Achad Haam had called the Jews' "spirit," their "moral genius." Which is not to say that competing moral ideologies, like those of laissez-faire conservatives, seemed indefensible. Rather, *Commentary*'s writers

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strongly implied what the Zionist stated: that such ideologies could not serve the needs of Judaism. Jews, rather, belonged with the utilitarians, the socialists and democrats; with people who took the emerging social good and not the individual's sensuous pleasure as the preeminent moral problem. It also seemed Jewish, I shall argue later on, to endorse the apparent goals of the Democratic party since Roosevelt, and this as a matter of principle not merely out of some immigrant habit to be shed along with economic distress.

That the Jews stand for something did not mean that *Commentary* should support every program a reform-minded Great Society Congress proposes: as early as 1963, the magazine was publishing perceptive articles by Nathan Glazer that anticipated the difficulties of reforming urban and educational institutions—even the minimal reforms being suggested by such other *Commentary* writers as Paul Goodman, Jane Jacobs, or Edgar Friedenberg. (Especially notable were the writings of Paul Goodman, to whom Podhoretz gave special encouragement; writing in an unsectarian radical spirit, Goodman helped initiate what was best in the political upsurge of the early '60s.)

Yet the democratic impulse for social reform—for having, as Glazer then put it, "the best society we can manage under the circumstances"—was never put in doubt; nor was it assumed to be doomed by some hypothetical human proclivity for infinite private gain by which Rotarians and Republicans warranted self-regulating markets. Rather Jews should presume that common plans, educational goals, ecological regulations, and social services need to be developed. That we live decently more by evolving an egalitarian culture in public than by private appropriation.

Nor did *Commentary* fail to ground such democratic ideals in the philosophical and psychological disquisitions democrats periodically need to carry on. Most important, in retrospect, were articles concerning questions we now would include in debates about "intelligence," the impact of social impoverishment on ghetto children, and so forth. *Commentary* seemed to appreciate early on the vital connection between egalitarian ideals and a view of intelligence as cultivated potential. Thus Adolf Portmann in "Beyond Darwinism" (November 1965):

> The growing human being is born out of the mother's body into a second uterus in which he traverses the second half of embryonic life; this is the social uterus. Thereby we also characterize the mighty task of society; we see how much the success or failure of the individual life depends on its proper performance during this decisive early epoch.

Of course, Portmann's argument was old hat: it would have seemed obvious to Aristotle. But *Commentary* was implying by such articles what must often be reiterated in democratic societies that, in part, aim to organize themselves according to merit; namely, that the poor performance of the poor cannot be ascribed to the inherent limits of individual minds. Racists and Tories have always been able to marshal empirical evidence against inferior classes, but have never acknowledged the extent to which the societies they defend help to produce their evidence.

As with social policy, *Commentary* represented the liberal-democratic instincts of American Jews in political and economic matters, publishing scores of articles by such writers as Oscar Gass, Robert Heilbroner, Robert Leckachman, and Dennis Wrong. It similarly pursued a moderate tone on diplomatic questions, running columns by George Lichtheim, Hans Morgenthau, and others who, while by no means indifferent to the fate of democracies abroad, were also concerned about the climate for military adventurism created by evangelical anti-Communist sophistry at home. *Commentary* came out against the Vietnam War by 1965, printing a detailed report by David Halberstam, and published a devastating attack by Theodore Draper on the Dominican crisis that same year. Such positions were highly controversial then, and aimed to discredit the brinkmanship of Dulles and the Domino theory of Rusk, both of which would nevertheless pave the way for foreign disaster.

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It seemed appropriate, finally, that the magazine treat Israel and Zionism with strong but equivocal admiration. For one thing, *Commentary* respected cultural fabric and so presumed its readers too ignorant of modern Israel to celebrate it without more basic information. For another, the claims of historic Zionism implied that the tangible, if modest, cultural activities of American Jews, indeed of the magazine, were unlikely or even fraudulent. (*Commentary*'s long-standing indifference to Zionist ideals had provoked the Zionist organizations to launch *Midstream* several years earlier.) Podhoretz therefore printed pieces that aimed to inform American Jews about the culture and politics of the Jewish state, but with the discretion due another country.

The magazine's best writer on Israeli affairs was, after 1967, Amos Elon whose urbane reports were then unveiling the problems that would fester in the 1970s. But *Commentary* was long before publishing rare, perceptive criticism of Rabbinate-State relations (Herbert Weiner, July 1964), of Zionist organizational rhetoric regarding Jewish immigration into Israel, "*aliyah*" (Ronald Sanders, August 1965), of popular Israeli culture and fiction (Robert Alter, December 1965, and Baruch Hochman, December 1966). Perhaps the best evidence for *Commentary*'s cool and intelligent approach to these issues was the way it handled the Six-Day War, resisting, as no other institution in American Jewish life, the unrealistic euphoria that victory unleashed.

In the August 1967 issue, for example, the magazine published four brilliant pieces on the war and its aftermath. The first two, by Theodore Draper and Walter Laqueur, were about the diplomatic and military implications of the war, and they still seem models of tact and objectivity. Yet the last two now seem even more valuable as the keynotes of a new age. Amos Elon's piece reviewed the events in Israel from May 15 to the climax of the war, but also played the minor chord that Israeli moderates were striking at home. Jerusalem, Elon explained, had been precipitously annexed, and some respectable Israeli leaders were now calling for doing the same to the entire West Bank, or for setting up a "puppet state" there, a "Bechuanaland for Arabs." If such thinking prevails, he warned, "the potential fruits of victory may be lost as they were in 1948 and 1956." This was tough talk and was followed, to the end of 1970, by equally tough-minded sequels. The best were by other prominent Israeli intellectuals—Shlomo Avineri and J. L. Talmon—who set out a judicious diplomatic strategy to engage Palestinians on the West Bank in discussions that might lead to a two-state solution.

The final piece, by Arthur Hertzberg, seemed of equal moment. The Six-Day War had, he wrote, suddenly drawn American Jews to a network of claims very different from the ones that had previously been operating with *Commentary*'s support:

> The sense of belonging to a worldwide Jewish people, of which Israel is the center, is a religious sentiment, but it seems to persist even among Jews who regard themselves as secularists or atheists. There are no conventional theological terms with which to explain this, and most contemporary Jews were experiencing these emotions without knowing how to define them.

Hertzberg, it must be said, remained equivocal about such narrow political Zionist rhetoric whose triumphant revival he identified: he had, after all, given it short shrift in his book on Zionist ideas. So he could not have known that his article was the harbinger of a trend that would help sink the creative life of the magazine.

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II: Breaking Ranks

If, as Hertzberg supposed, the 1967 war was a "transforming" event for American Jews, Norman Podhoretz should not have been immune. But the next several years saw the magazine undergo a conversion more complete than any that might have been warranted by the chance to take Israel's part—profess "Zionism"—in the face of the Jewish state's enemies. In fact, the aftermath of the Middle East war coincided with other crucial events affecting the politics of the American left. Podhoretz's literary career also suffered shocks that seemed to provide him the occasion to "break ranks" (as he's recently put it) with most of the New York writers for whose good opinion he had once so diligently hustled. He's written at length about his defection from "the movement"—*Breaking Ranks* is a book of 350 pages. I shall not presume to review the verdict he's reached of his erstwhile friends, though I doubt that others should resist the temptation to read the book from the name-index back to the text.

Nevertheless, *Breaking Ranks* is intriguing—like all of his didactic memoirs—for what it reveals about Podhoretz's unarticulated images of Jews, gentiles, and power. Only four pages in the book are actually devoted to the subject—to the "movement's" incipient self-hatred or anti-Semitism—but this may be misleading insofar as Podhoretz had already admitted that he could not consider Jewish identity and interests apart from the realpolitik he had claimed to learn in the streets of Brooklyn. In this sense, the entire book is about the reappropriation of his primal view of those interests, about defying "the people in the world who act as if they have nothing to lose": lately, the Soviets, black militants, student radicals, Communist insurgents, anti-Zionist Palestinians, and more.

No fair-minded person could fail to appreciate Podhoretz's evolving animus: by the end of 1968, the Soviets had rearmed and incited the Arabs against Israel, had marched on Prague; this, while some American black leaders were composing anti-Semitic and illiberal diatribes, supported openly by thousands of students who violently occupied university buildings, or were "into" drugs, and so forth. Yet, again, his revulsion from the Soviets and the New Left cannot explain Podhoretz's growing distaste for the writers, editors, politicians, and others in the Vietnam peace camp who mainly shared his sentiments. It seems worth recalling that most of *Commentary*'s polemics around 1968 were written by some of the very "radicals" whose presumed fecklessness he meant to expose in writing *Breaking Ranks*: Norman Mailer on the "new politics," Michael Harrington on the Democratic party, Diana Trilling on the occupation of Columbia University, and Irving Howe on the failure of New York intellectuals to stem the authoritarian instincts of the New Left. These were strong pieces that could hardly be said to be pandering to antidemocratic forces or their apologists.

In fact, Podhoretz was breaking ranks—breaking faith—with those people who were holding to the radically democratic view of politics with which *Commentary* had justifiably tried to identify American Jews for a decade, but with which he had himself admitted being at emotional odds since his youth. It is hardly clear just what precipitated the break when it came. Most of the people he would repudiate shared the assumption he suddenly and curiously denied: that the American government's decision to intervene in Vietnam—and the brutal comportment of many American soldiers there—could be traced to some aspects of American political culture. Perhaps Podhoretz earnestly believed that this was no time to rail against American values, no matter how high-minded the motive, although such concerns did not stop him from opposing the war even when all the reasons for opposing it had not yet become clear.

More likely, Podhoretz was confounded by the wide appeal of those critics, philosophers, and folk-singers, also Jews, who invited us to see Vietnam as a product of those particular American values—money, power, fame—which he had just endorsed in

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Making It, and with such obvious self-congratulation that "the Family" of New York intellectuals could not hide its embarrassment. Of course, it was no short leap from the politics of money, power, and fame to Southeast Asia; it also was not a long one to the new Republican administration, which, Podhoretz must have noticed, had more of all three than even Lionel Trilling.

It is no use dwelling on these motives, but we can hardly ignore their consequences. From 1969 on, *Commentary* gradually revamped the vocabulary by which American Jews were to consider their interests. That's an important word—"interests"—for Podhoretz would invest it with a very different meaning from the one *Commentary* had established during the previous ten years. Where he had assumed American Jews to be an eclectic collection of individuals with incipient purposes—self-criticism, the study of Jewish history and philosophy, democratic ethics—the new *Commentary* had begun to depict us as a corporate entity with overt interests in self-promotion and gain—an "interest group." The magazine now took our consolidation for granted, our material goals as self-evident, and began coaching us, too, on how to make it in America.

To reinforce the determination of American Jews to break ranks along with him, Podhoretz began writing editorials on all sorts of issues—from rock culture to rent control—which invited his readers to consider what seems now "good for the Jews" according to what he began to call "traditional" criteria. I shall consider that new tradition presently, but I first want to comment on two articles by other writers that epitomize the narrow and reckless style of argument by which *Commentary* sought to convince American Jews that it was no longer difficult to figure out what was good for them.

The first, by Emil Fackenheim, set the tone by using the images of catastrophe—of the Holocaust—to contrive a moral climate in which intense American Jewish solidarity could seem plausible without regard to our deteriorating cultural bonds. It also implied the pitiless nature of mankind in general and so seemed to warrant our preoccupation with gain. It is important to emphasize that this was a new departure for the magazine, which had hitherto treated the mass murders as history so complex one required great modesty to get a grasp of it.

For example, while carefully refuting Hannah Arendt's indictment of the *Judenrat*, Podhoretz had himself in 1963 followed her lead in presenting the Nazi's Final Solution not as the basis for some new Jewish cosmology but as the moral burden of German culture, of Christians, as the material for psychoanalytic reasoning. It was not a Jewish moral problem in any positive sense that may attach to modern Jewish life, but *the* problem for anyone concerned with politics. This is, of course, not to denigrate the sufferings of individual Jews or the loss of the Jewish cultural center in Eastern Europe. Nor should anyone deny traditional and Orthodox Jews the appropriation of the Holocaust as an event unique to the Jews, to be absorbed into the liturgy like former catastrophes. It is to suggest, as Podhoretz put it, that there are no easy lessons to be learned except that "the victims were hopelessly vulnerable in their powerlessness."

Victims cannot claim a priviledged vantage point from which to solve political questions; not, at least, just for having been victims. Indeed, what Jewish victims could fail to find in mass murder perfect evidence for the justice of their political philosophy? Liberals, assimilationists, Communists, and Zionists, all will have theories about how the world goes wrong that anticipate how to put it right. Podhoretz was not wrong, in 1963, to confess confusion about whether the survival of Jews was worth the pain of an infant. It is not the murderers who solve the existential dilemmas that may have plagued the murdered and continue to perplex their survivors. Yet, in August 1968, Fackenheim's new article implied just this murderer's inadvertent solution for the Jewish Problem, a modern revelation by which Jews could regain a common purpose, could know and promote each other in public. No shlemiels they, the transformed Pod-

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horetz and his fellow editors of the new *Commentary* seized upon it—its preoccupation with the "power" of physical violence—to shrug off almost every serious question that's been raised about Jewish life from the Napoleonic Sanhedrin to the *New York Review*. The death camps, it seems, have given the Jews a new opportunity to "prepare a way for God":

> Auschwitz is a unique descent into hell. It is an unprecedented celebration of evil. It is evil for evil's sake. Jews must bear witness to this truth. . . . They were and still are singled out by it, but in the midst of it they hear an absolute commandment: *Jews are forbidden to grant posthumous victories to Hitler*. They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. They are commanded to remember the victims of Auschwitz lest their memory perish. They are forbidden to despair of man and his world, and to escape into either cynicism or otherworldliness, lest they cooperate in delivering the world over to the forces of Auschwitz. Finally, they are forbidden to despair of the God of Israel lest Judaism perish. A secularist Jew can not make himself believe by a mere act of will, nor can he be commanded to do so; yet he can perform the commandment of Auschwitz.

Now it is true that traditional Jews are supposed to act as if they too stood at Sinai, but this is something very different. Fackenheim is not asking us to take on some distinct ethical obligations, but rather to "stand at Auschwitz" in order to see Jewish survival as an end in itself. Thereby we all—even our suburban princesses—take on the prestige of victims.

Putting aside the obvious moral difficulties evoked by words like good and evil, Fackenheim's dialectical argument cast the Jews in the role of the purveyors of absolute good, and raised the old, ironic concern of our fathers—now Podhoretz's new one—with what's "good for the Jews" to some apparently unambiguous ontological claim.

I've implied that Hitler's main victory to be denied is a view of Jews compatible with fatuous and tribalistic criteria, the obscuring of the serious differences in culture, outlook, and temperament between, say, Anne Frank and Elie Wiesel, Lillian Hellman and A. B. Yehoshua. But this is not the victory Fackenheim had in mind. The Jews spite the forces of Auschwitz, rather, by staying alert to their interests, by remaining tough-minded and realistic—not "cynical or otherwordly"—and so concerned to augment the material forces of Jewish "power." The greatest Jewish act, he wrote (as if he had never heard of Mussolini), is to have Jewish babies. He once told me in Toronto that, instead of American Jews hearing the slogan "never again" from our leaders, he would have us hear a running tally of the divisions and weapons at the disposal of Israel and the Western powers. And as if such ironies were not sufficient, Jews must also reaffirm Orthodox practice at least insofar as this will ensure our cohesion.

What forces of Auschwitz specifically did Fackenheim expect his united, crusading people to defy? Can it be true that the subjects of this retribution to which he further alludes are *Commentary*'s new foils: The Palestinians, the Soviets, "anti-Semites" of the New Left, and the "appeasers" in America who fail to notice how the world may "be delivered into *their* hands"? Tyrants, terrorists, and Jew-haters are political adversaries that do Fackenheim credit. But no recognition of enemies requires Jews to surrender to apocalyptic demagogy. It is not the "forces of Auschwitz" that turned Fackenheim into a Cold Warrior par excellence but the poverty of his own moral and historical imagination; and *Commentary* certainly did the political experience of American Jews no justice running his piece.

We should be truly naive to assume that Fackenheim's article was meant to stand on its own, apart from Podhoretz's new determination to see "Jewish interests" in America as everyone else's gain. This determination obviously inspired Milton Himmelfarb's subsequent article, "Is American Jewry in Crisis?" published in March 1969, just after Nixon and Agnew (and Moynihan) took office. Here Himmelfarb dismissed the Jews' defensible position in politics and social life, and advised us to see ourselves as victims

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worthy of Fackenheim's cosmos. Specifically, he charged that the New York liberal-democratic establishment—WASPs and anti-Jewish Jews alike—had conspired, maybe secretly, with black militants to win public concessions that could mainly hurt "ordinary Jews" whose sensible fears he then adumbrated: burgeoning welfare rolls carried by Jewish taxes, places held in universities for black children who inevitably would push out Jewish ones, and so forth. Himmelfarb's main evidence of anti-Jewish conspiracy was the political showdown between the predominantly Jewish New York Teachers' Union and the Oceanhill-Brownsville school board. Some scurrilously anti-Semitic pamphlets were published by anonymous black authors, which seemed to him sufficient reason to sound the shofar.

The tone of Himmelfarb's piece was even more disconcerting than his thesis. As if American Jews were already carrying the mantle of Jewish martyrs, Himmelfarb proceeded with exquisite sanctimony to condemn all "universal" claims—claims that, he guessed, do not specifically recognize Jewish "particularity"—as sham altruisms beneath which Jews leave themselves open to physical attack. Could Jews, for example, expect reciprocal support from the other "ethnics" in the Democratic party, from the Italians, the Poles? Jews could not: "On aid to parochial schools and smut control, they are for, the Jews are against. The Jews go to college, they do not. They hunt, the Jews do not."

How does *Commentary* propose we deal with such extraordinary isolation and vulnerability? Settling in Israel would seem the obvious answer, but the magazine's Zionism was never strong and remained vicarious. Israel might now be a cause for celebration—the same issue boasted a piece by Gil Carl Alroy suggesting that tough, technological Israel would trounce any combination of Arab armies for a generation—but it was Israel's image, not its culture or problems, that the new *Commentary* wanted. What would "Israel" do if it lived in Brooklyn and not among the Arabs? It would , Himmelfarb suggested, vote Republican, or at least threaten the Democrats with abandonment.

Himmelfarb had in fact begun his piece with what he thought was a revealing bit of polling. Where some 70 percent of well-heeled gentiles had voted against Hubert Humphrey in 1968, 81 percent of all Jews voted for him. This seemed to him serious evidence indeed for an American Jewish hubris to be compared to the utopianism of Rosa Luxemburg. American Jews as a whole, he contended, are in the "highest income bracket," like Episcopalians, yet seem indifferent to their apparent class interests. New Left critics no doubt found it reassuring to see an anti-Communist such as Himmelfarb express this approving fascination for class-consciousness, but many readers were offended by the piece. *Commentary*, to its credit, printed angry letters about it. Yet the magazine proceeded undaunted in Himmelfarb's—and Fackenheim's—manner. The time had come to develop elbows.

III: Tradition

Suppose that Himmelfarb's version of American Jews is right: an interest group whose problem it is to secure its élan and income in the face of self-regarding WASPs, radicals (too often Jewish) pliant in the face of "communism," some black free-loaders, many ethnic stiffs, and other anti-Semites. How can Jews throw their weight around in this plural American Republic? What specific policies ought to capture our imagination (or provoke our opposition), what allies are worth having? It seems to me that much of what has subsequently been called the neo-conservative position has been evolved as an implicit answer to this bad question, and that the answer itself is neither very conservative nor new, except to New York Jews. European conservatives, Hannah Arendt or Leo Strauss, could not have acquiesced in putting the problem so that common material gain would have priority over the intellectual lives of our best. It should rather be granted that Podhoretz, Irving Kristol, and the rest are

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quite right to call themselves "liberals"—in the British sense of people who view liberty as the protection of life and property from the invasion of others—convinced supporters of the notion that all men incline to be infinite consumers of scarce utilities (such as "money, power, fame"). They claim that unhampered market societies alone accommodate such propensities efficiently, and that market incentives are our best cure for social problems, and good for the Jews for obvious reasons.

By 1971 Nathan Glazer, for example, had raised his reservations regarding the proper execution of social politics to a full-scale attack on the principle of social planning. The article—"The Limits of Social Policy" (September 1971)—demanded virtual resignation from the poor and their "radical" champions to the slaps of the hidden hand of the market. By June 1975 Glazer charged that American Jews were particularly "exposed" by the social remedies. Social policies, he assured us, will not work in America, while "traditional" solutions—presumably "growth"—would. Why should social planning not work? Because resources are too limited, programs become disincentives for wholesome work, are administered typically by professionals who prove "limited and untrustworthy" and tackle problems too complex for the "knowledge we would like to have." The welfare programs, he charged, are especially good examples of government waste, as are those for housing—charges Michael Harrington has specifically refuted but that I'll concede for the sake of argument.

A close inspection of Glazer's claims suggest only two problems that seem really intractable—scarce resources and incentives—and these are the ones Glazer really meant us to consider. The first, however, turns out to be not an assessment of how resources become scarce (through, for example, badly planned but not hopeless entitlement programs such as Social Security, chronic and structural causes of falling productivity, squandered billions of dollars in Vietnam, and so forth)—but rather a warrant for our common disinclination to support welfare measures through our taxes. This disposition he correctly hinged on the widespread conviction that these programs do not work (just what he intends us to believe), and on the fear that welfare encourages the shirking of work. So when one comes down to it, Glazer's celebrated insights were also no more or less compelling than the claims of classical liberalism, that laboring men need to fear the pains of idleness more than the pains of work. At least, it is only because such "incentives" for work were built into Nixon's abortive Family Assistance Program that Glazer endorsed it.

But Glazer endorsed precious little besides. What decent people can best do, he suggests, is "prevent the further erosion of traditional constraints that still play the largest role in maintaining civil society"—erosion of our common belief in productive work, respect for property, social reciprocity, which are supported by the "family, but also the ethnic group, the neighborhood, . . . the church and the *landsmanhaft*." The real problem, revealed by his solution, is that the people in the ghettos will not work, because they are disaffected from civil life for want of traditions and family life and seem more mired in social decay than conventional welfare measures will cure.

In this sense, the neoconservative position is a powerful obfuscation, one that has been around almost as long as liberalism. Edmund Burke, too, tried to get his readers thinking about the Terror, professing "traditional" loyalty to "our King and Constitution" and to the family, while assuring everyone that such loyalty is best expressed by refraining from "indiscreet tamperings with the trade of provisions." The market, he urged, will solve its own problems given a sufficient amount of time and faith—which is just what those whom Burke described as thrown off the "great wheel of commerce" never seem to have much of. John Stuart Mill rightly observed, anticipating the politics of the Fabians and of the New Deal, that state interventions for the purpose of enhancing equality and regulating growth was therefore a protection of the property rights in which, he thought, some of our democratic liberties were grounded, while laissez-faire ideas

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menaced them by encouraging class divisions, crime, and despair. Such economic leadership is more urgent today when, as in Japan and the West European countries, government may have to act to organize credit for major corporations that are retooling or embarking on a new technology; to assure energy conservation, mediate industry-wide wage disputes, set standards for public health, and so on.

But Glazer will not even concede the use of national health insurance:

> We are kept healthy by certain patterns of life . . . by having access to traditional means of support in distress and illness, through the family . . . the school . . . the neighborhood, the informal social organization. We are kept healthy by care in institutions where traditionally-oriented occupations (nursing and the maintenance of cleanliness) still manage to perform their functions.

Some of this is merely trite: no one since Pasteur would deny that clean people will stay healthier than filthy people, though we are immeasurably cleaner owing to government actions against open sewers, air pollution, bad nutrition, and so on, than we would otherwise be regardless of how much our mothers carp at us to wash. But his statement is also tendentious, for Glazer properly wants us to care about the condition of family life without identifying its overt dependence on conditions over which it (and the *landsmanshaft*) can have no control. Schools and hospitals are not "traditional" institutions merely because such "traditional" occupations as teaching and healing are practiced there. They are built by government to serve people who, by the exigencies of the market, were once kept illiterate and sick. Moreover, Glazer's views seem indifferent to thousands of black families that have been broken as a consequence of "neighborhood" prejudices, which denied them entry during the 1940s and '50s, when the economy was expanding at a pace that might well have substantially broadened the black middle class as it did the Jewish. And Glazer's indifference can only be willful since in his book *Beyond the Melting Pot*, coauthored with D. P. Moynihan, he recnized the racism of ethnic neighborhoods.

In fact, does any of this earnest concern for the family—the hinge on which neoconservatism turns—take account of the way a father's love succumbs to self-hatred when he cannot find work? It does not acknowledge that dignified and secure employment will not necessarily exist even for blacks converted to Calvinist notions of work: that, for example, the "traditional" market forces, interpreted by short-sighted management, have wrecked some of the American auto industry putting hundreds of thousands more blacks and whites out of the jobs they had.

If Glazer were right that the families of our underclass in the great Northeastern cities have not been improved by attempted welfare measures, and that this constitutes a danger to the civil society from which Jews and others make their happier lives, he cannot be right that "benign neglect" (as Moynihan put it) is the alternative. The family needs work, medical services, safe streets, clean housing, good schools, day care, public transportation, public libraries and public television, student loans, and many other services over many years. (We certainly need to wage campaigns against illiteracy and commercial TV, more than Midge Decter's mean-spirited ones against the women's movement and homosexuals.) If conventional government action has not been enough to help consolidate families in the ghettos, then unconventional action might: not less spending but much, much more. But there is no use denouncing social policies that fail or seem to fail if the alternative to them is the worse failure of social life such policies were invented to allay.

Now *Commentary* flattened to a hard line on so many corresponding social issues that its once apparent commitment to eclecticism vanished. Podhoretz seemed, for example, far more exercised by affirmative action programs than he had been about the welfare state. He began publishing piece after piece (by Paul Seabury, Earl Raab, Martin Mayer, and others) denouncing affirmative action as a new form of discrimination, particularly

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against Jews, who presumably have as great a stake in "traditional" conceptions of merit as they have had in the free play of market forces: "As it happens, the Jews are at this moment in an extremely good position to serve the best interests of the country as a whole by attempting to serve their own."

I do not propose to defend all affirmative action programs, especially not those setting firm quotas that Thomas Sowell rightly condemns for patronizing blacks who don't need them and putting others into jobs and classes they may not be able to handle. But special efforts to hire or admit nearly qualified people to these jobs and classes, on the assumption that the new experience will help them transcend the cultural deprivation of ghetto neighborhoods, is no pernicious form of discrimination. Generous people will discriminate on behalf of those who are disadvantaged, but that does not make such people bigots: the Hebrews would not have left Egypt if God had judged them then by the criteria He demanded for entering the Promised Land.

Podhoretz misleads Jewish parents, who do not need extra anxieties, in asserting that programs aiming to include a larger proportion of black students in professional schools are some kind of anti-Jewish quota just because Jewish students make up a disproportionately large number of applicants. The Supreme Court is right to acknowledge that, as a temporary remedy, race could be used as one of the many criteria admissions committees should consider when deciding on applications. Ronald Dworkin has argued that the social benefits attending an increase of black professionals constitute a compelling claim. By contrast, *Commentary*'s view of merit—presumably, strict comparisons of performance on aptitude tests, teachers' recommendations, and so forth—seem no more an impersonal standard for merit than wealth is for guile.

But, since the advent of Milton Friedman's disciple Thomas Sowell, we do not see advocates of affirmative action like Leon Higginbotham and Vernon Jordan honorably defended in the pages of the magazine. What we do see are attacks suggesting that the very spirit in which affirmative-action programs are mooted is yet another conspiracy of New Class intellectuals who despise everything "bourgeois" because they are not sufficiently horrified by communism, and quotas. We also see such pieces as Irving Kristol's "Equality," which aimed to reassure us that "the bourgeois conception of equality, so vehemently denounced by the egalitarian . . . is 'natural' in a way that other political ideas are not" and that the poor, like the rest of us, need spiritual values that no economic system can provide.

I shall consider in a little while the kind of spiritual values this radical, possessive individualism is likely to generate in America, whether Kristol's bourgeois elites will promote the tolerance Jews need. But his distinction between the purposes of the flesh and those of the spirit already concedes more than an American Jew should.

Spiritual consolation is not irrelevant to common opportunities to exert our capacities as creative men and women, to cultivate our appreciation for the works of others. This was called "humanism" before the Reverend Jerry Falwell turned the word into an epithet. Such opportunities, Kristol surely understood, have some foundation in economic claims—pianos, for example, are not free—which is not to say (what Kristol in fact needs to maintain in order for markets to work) that material interests are the only ones that count.

Still, since Kristol has anointed his contradictory bourgeois concepts as "natural," what can be left to debate? Nothing, or so it seemed from the increasingly strident polemics that Podhoretz was demanding from his writers. Traditionalists are nothing if not consistent. For example, the theory that continuing economic expansion under laissez-faire is impossible—first proposed by Mill in his *Principles of Political Economy*—was not to be merely refuted but must be said, as in a Rudolph Klein piece, to be the work of "enemies." Moreover, a majority of blacks were now in the "middle class" (which Scammon and Wattenberg delicately defined to include any-

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one not chronically unemployed), and only "liberal" rhetoric calls this progress into question. More recently, the magazine even sought vindication for California's Proposition 13, which Lipset and Raab asserted was mainly directed at the welfare bums Glazer had supposedly identified some years before.

None of these claims against "New Class" assumptions can match for pure venom the magazine's hopeless campaign to revive the prestige of IQ testing as a basis for explaining inequality and merit, promoting especially the work of social scientists who have attempted to account for the black underclass as if it were, at least in part, determined by biological necessity. Again, the issue of IQ raises profound questions about what educated people mean by intelligence and learning—epistemological questions—which cannot be settled here. The effort to extrude some quantified version of intelligence may itself derive from a simple-minded view of the mind: the disease, as it were, for which it presumes to be the cure. Further attempts to link our performance in society to such criteria as IQ—to show the poor as dumber than the rich—seem a double violation of moral tact.

David K. Cohen stated just this view in the magazine as late as 1972. Yet such sensible opinions were not to last long in a magazine now committted to finding egalitarian ideals utopian and inequalities rooted in nature: for if a certain few social scientists are vilified by the New Class for searching out the genetic roots of inequality, how much more reason to assume them right.

In spite of Cohen's article *Commentary* published (July 1972) a lively defense of Edward Banfield's book *The Unheavenly City* (which had argued to the nifty proposition: "if the lower class were to disappear . . . the most serious and intractable problems of the city would disappear with it"). Then, as if we did not get the point, *Commentary* eventually published articles by scholars whose vigorous advocacy of IQ testing in relation to racial groups—Richard Herrnstein and Arthur Jensen—have made their work still more notorious than Banfield's. Podhoretz even had Herrnstein review Jensen's latest book, *Bias in Mental Testing*, which aimed to vindicate the theoretical framework by which Jensen had earlier speculated that blacks inherit intellectual inferiorities, especially what he had called "adaptive reasoning." He might at least of have asked Sowell to do the review in view of the latter's interesting point that the IQs of Jews have seemed marvelously to rise since the 1920s—since, that is, more Jews have gained the education and affluence their former below-average IQs would not seem to have assured.

Of course *Commentary*'s sanctimonious view of affirmative action, its advocacy of market solutions to social problems, and implied biological warrants for both, were bound to inflame even black moderates in the Urban League and NAACP. Bayard Rustin, who's remained sympathetic to Podhoretz's view on diplomatic issues, once told me that he considered the magazine's line on social questions a dishonor to the relations of blacks and Jews in New York. For *Commentary* is after all a Jewish magazine, one for which the American Jewish Committee must find a $125,000 subvention every year. Black anti-Semitism, particularly the kind that emerged from the Black Power movement associated with the New Left, can never be condoned.

But neither are Jews exempt from demands of propriety and restraint. Of course, as Ruth Wisse's recent Yiddish fables suggest, Jews are not to begrudge themselves the right to inflame others when their vital interests are at issue; we even have the right to be wrong. But when the editors of the most conspicuous Jewish journal are wrong in the most discreditable way, violating common standards of fairness, that is a worthy subject for public debate. Some other American Jews should be expected to respond in public and repudiate the politics that the magazine claims to be pursuing for our "own good."

This expectation is of course also relevant to the question of the magazine's insistence on a Jewish lockstep regarding Israel. While *Commentary* has generally maintained a balanced view of Israel's diplomatic and military op-

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tions—continuing to publish moderate pieces by Theodore Draper, Walter Laqueur, Hillel Halkin, and others who remained unimpressed by Uri Raanan's diatribes against Egypt that also appeared in the magazine—it has nevertheless printed two angry attacks on American Jewish groups that have attempted to organize support for the Israeli peace camp. The first, by Joseph Shattan, was a most irresponsible hatchet job on Breira in 1977. More recently, Ruth Wisse has adopted a merely patronizing tone to scold the American Friends of Peace Now. Wisse's indictment in fact suggested that public dissent by American Jews about Israeli actions is inherently wrong since we do not take the consequences of that country's diplomatic actions; that, anyway, Jews who speak against the Israeli government are to be compared to the shlemiels of Chelm who tried to curry favor among the goyim by condemning themselves for their suffering, and are insensible to the need for solidarity.

I've never quite understood the delight Ruth Wisse takes in imagining herself the resident of a ghetto. Nevertheless, she seems to have missed what *Commentary* once deeply grasped, that American Jews register approval and dissent as citizens of a democratic country, and in addressing Israeli problems inevitably support some rather than other Israeli politicians. Israelis make such claims as well. Such groups as Friends of Peace Now have aimed to build coalitions of support for Israel by attempting to salvage the progressive American constituency for Israeli moderates. This peace group did not consider it inappropriate for *Commentary* to publish Raanan's article, which would have had Israel disastrously break off negotiations with Egypt long before the Camp David peace process bore fruit. Raanan represented a minority opinion in Israel, and *Commentary*'s editors would also not "have to live" with the war his hawkish policies might have provoked, or the one that views such as Alroy's did help to provoke. Wisse's demurrers that her views are mindful of Israel's need for power, while "the well-known leftists" of Peace Now are not, seems so much affectation: power must be debated and is just not as devoid of opportunities, limits, and complications as her shlemiels may suppose.

IV: The Present Danger—and Ours

The magazine's defense of "bourgeois" civilization for the sake of the Jews has given way to corresponding and false abstractions about the use of American "interests" and power in international conflicts. *Commentary* now specializes in foreign-policy articles aiming to promote greater defense budgets and diplomatic militancy. In the past, the magazine did resist the facile anticommunism that helped put half a million Americans into Vietnam in 1965—yet surrenders to it now that Podhoretz's earlier courage seems so clearly vindicated. Not that the Soviet Union's ambitions were ever to be trusted, or its regime to be admired. But *Commentary* once published Ronald Steele and others who argued that those ambitions are hardly the main problem in formulating U.S. policy toward the leaders of premodern countries and their liberation movements, for whom socialist principles mainly lead to arguable theories of economic development—often learned at Western universities—which are by no means expressions of allegiance to the Soviet empire. China—which, remember, we had intended to foil in Vietnam—may be the most striking example of how careful we must be about such distinctions, but the Egyptian case is also germane.

Notwithstanding Jeane Kirkpatrick's faith in the strength of old ways and old cultures, when America lavishes arms and aid on old military regimes in trouble, a country will indeed fall like a domino. Events in Iran should have taught us that such a lavishing can lead to megalomania and thus itself become a cause for popular disaffection. By contrast, when America keeps its hands off as in Nicaragua or vigorously pursues democratic solutions as in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, "revolutionary" regimes may soon be courting Western countries for the economic and technological support they cannot hope to get from the Soviets. Even the Angolans seem

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hungry for greater ties with American firms —they are already doing brisk business with European ones and almost none with the Soviets—though Cuban forces remain. These countries will be lost to American interests if the new Administration denies them the aid they need, or keeps reading *Commentary* as therapy for our "Vietnam complex."

But Podhoretz's view that our hard-earned moral and diplomatic caution is a kind of nervous disorder, leaving us powerless in the face of ruthless men, seems curiously familiar —though not, as he fancies, reminiscent of Churchill pushing on alone in a nest of appeasers. If anything, Podhoretz's accusations have done wonders for his reputation among the Republican brokers who are now operating behind Ronald Reagan's reassuring shrugs. They already may claim to have quashed the SALT treaty, discredited Kissinger's "détente," and proposed the MX, the neutron bomb, the B-1, the seizing of oilfields, support for any autocratic government that is merely, in Ms. Kirkpatrick's immortal phrase, "moderately repressive."

Too many articles in this vein have appeared in *Commentary* over the last several years by Jeane Kirkpatrick, Robert W. Tucker, Edward Luttwak, and others to be answered all at once. Some of these, it must be said, have made a very convincing case for greater attention to NATO and to America's conventional forces, for cutting off high technology to the Soviets, and other policies almost every responsible journal has been promoting recently, in part as a result of *Commentary*'s prodding. But two issues stand out as especially neat examples of childhood fears of cowardice masquerading as diplomatic realism, and I shall treat them in turn.

The first and comprehensive issue, which Podhoretz shrewdly calls "the Present Danger," suggests America's "decline" in the world, owing to our presumed decline in strategic weapons, which has itself been precipitated by our "mood of self-doubt and self-disgust" after Vietnam. I think that "decline" and "self-disgust" pertain more suitably to the realm of writers' blocks and difficulties than they describe the reasons for decisions made by secretaries of state about strategic weapons. *Commentary*'s version of "the Present Danger" surely is more dramatic than any proposal or debate in pursuit of a solution guided by conventional thinking—as, for instance, the proposal to institute compulsory national service, which the magazine virtually ignored. Podhoretz's views require the morale to face up to Soviet designs in the Persian Gulf even at the risk of a nuclear exchange.

Aside from its elaborate and dim view of our collective will, *Commentary*'s argument for more strategic forces and militant diplomacy actually reduces to a syllogism about Soviet intentions and capabilities that is vulnerable on many grounds. According to the official version presented by Richard Pipes (July 1977), the argument goes as follows: We and the Russians have counterforce weapons and countervalue weapons. Counterforce weapons are land-based, hence comparatively accurate missiles that can attack and incinerate the other's missiles in hardened silos and kill a mere, say, 20 million people in the assault. Countervalue weapons (quaintly) are only accurate enought to incinerate cities, yet relatively few (300, in fact, of the 10,000 we have) would be enough to kill everybody in either the Soviet Union or the United States. We have fewer counterforce weapons than the Soviets; they think nuclear war is possible and would execute a first strike if they saw vital advantages to the risk.

This, according to Pipes, is the rub. The Soviets already have and are accumulating a sufficient number of counterforce weapons that, if launched in a surprise attack, could destroy enough of the American counterforce arsenal to leave American leaders only the choice between launching some of the thousands of countervalue missiles that remain to SAC or the submarine fleet—a step leading to the extinction of mankind—or capitulating to a Soviet dictat. Even if they never launch their strike, our knowledge that they could is enough to crack our will to oppose their power plays, as in the Persian Gulf. It is

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this latter scenario that Podhoretz has specifically called our impending Findlandization. The Soviets know that we are aware of this, and therefore they may well try any number of moves against us unless we build the "shell-game" MX system.

Some further axioms are necessary to make the argument work. The first is that Soviet leaders would willingly risk sacrificing a good many of their citizens in a counterforce exchange—most likely, some of the millions of ethnic Russians who live along the trans-Siberian railway where Soviet counterforce weapons are siloed. Soviet leaders cannot, after all, expect that no American counterforce weapons would escape a Soviet first strike since American leaders would have some 30 minutes to retaliate in kind. Nevertheless, Richard Pipes assures us that the Soviets would take the risk, because having lost tens of millions in World War II the Soviet leadership would not value life as we do in the West. (By this logic, Israeli leaders should be even more keen than the Russians on military adventures. Still, let's concede the point since Pipes reads Russian and teaches at Harvard.)

Pipes's second axiom is that Soviet missile accuracy is fine enough to wipe out most of our counterforce weapons and that Soviet planners can depend on this. No one at M.I.T., it seems, is ready to concede this point—Kosta Tsipis has in fact pointed out that the Russians would have to control the winds, rain, and gravitational fields over thousands of miles to depend on it—but I shall concede it without even making the case for our super-duper cruise missiles as counterforce alternatives in their own right.

Rather, consider the essential quandary Pipes and Podhoretz envision for the American president after the surprise attack: a full 20 million Midwesterners have been killed, but American countervalue weapons remain intact, as do our conventional forces and most of our vastly superior industrial base. The same can be said for Western Europe, China, and Japan, which still can claim the resources of Africa and Latin America even if the Soviets have captured the Persian Gulf. Can the Soviet leadership expect to withstand a conventional, protracted war waged against it by such an alliance? Can it even hope to count on its East European hostages or bourgeoning Moslem populations? Granted, the Soviets would still have nuclear weapons to threaten the world's cities, but so would the United States and other nations, and the choice to capitulate or risk ending civilization could well be reversed.

Of course, Podhoretz and Pipes have presented us with a thoroughly eccentric view of American choices and Soviet risks. It assumes what the Soviets cannot, that free people will surrender their freedom at the drop of a bomb while the populations of totalitarian states will fight to the end. Did the Japanese "Manchurianize" the United States by destroying the fleet at Pearl Harbor? And as if Pipes's casuistry were not enough, Podhoretz adds the insinuation that the Japanese and others would now sell themselves to whatever country should supply them oil, even if the Soviets needed nuclear terror to win the right.

What civilized citizens would stand for this, except in the imaginations of writers so cynical about human nature that they consider all moral ideals and restraints a gloss on material gain? Are the people of democratic countries to be compared to Podhoretz's youthful gangs who retreat in the face of anybody who smacks them in the nose? Is making war the same as becoming king of the block? More to the point, is it worth throwing $200 billion or more at our security problem to preempt a diplomatic choice so cynically conceived, especially since those dollars would procure U.S. first-strike capability, which the Soviets will have to match with trip-wire defenses that are far from reliable?

Jews have a special need to consider these arguments, not only because we've defended civilized behavior since Abraham, but because Podhoretz and Edward Luttwak (February 1975) have made support for expansive American strategic power a *sine qua non* of support for Israel. We cannot realistically expect Israel to get continuing supplies of weapons and aid, they warn, unless the American president and Congress have made an

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overall commitment of playing it tough with the Russians. Moreover, in their view, converse relations of dependence also hold: so people who remain open to less hawkish solutions to Israel's problems, who would, for example, welcome an end to Israeli settlement on the West Bank and more forthright Israeli negotiations in the Palestinian autonomy talks, are just appeasers. Palestinian claims are to be compared to those of the Sudeten Germans in the Nazi years. American Jews, they conclude, should encourage all other Americans to appreciate Israel for a toughness the Czechs lacked in pursuing its interests and those of the West (August 1980 issue). Israel, in short, is nothing less than a strategic asset for the United States.

V: Good for the Jews?

Let us be clear that support for Israel in the United States has always been led by a coalition of Jewish activists and non-Jewish liberal politicians, progressive journalists, labor leaders, and so forth, who've approved historic Zionist goals because they despise anti-Semitism and have grown increasingly intrigued by Israel's democratic and cooperative institutions. This, despite the knowledge that Israel only complicates American strategic interests in the Middle East, which have historically rested with the Gulf states and their revolving protectors in the Arab world. It was this coalition—from Stephen Wise to Hubert Humphrey—that prevailed upon President Truman to recognize Israel over the strong objections of the State Department, and that has actively secured Israel's military and diplomatic requirements in Congress since the Kennedy administration.

Commentary's depiction of Israel as mainly a strategic asset since 1973 has shaken this progressive coalition. If Israel is a strategic asset—as the post-Vietnam generation has been invited to believe by our premier Jewish monthly—then perhaps it is nothing but this. And *Commentary* has made the job of ignoring our ethical responsibilities to the Jewish state even easier. In spite of Moynihan's raising of the issue in 1977, the magazine has lately insisted that "human rights" questions (which reflect badly on Israel's policy of occupation but not on its right to a just survival) perplexed only the naifs of the Carter administration. Worse, Jeane Kirkpatrick and Carl Gershman have implied that traditional dictatorships are not assumed to be comparable to the tyrannies of communism, because the former satisfy their people's "spiritual" needs. This recipe for diplomatic support was meant to justify our support for regimes like that in South Korea; but ordinary Americans who read *Time* magazine are clever enough to note its applicability to the Egyptians and even the Saudis.

Moreover, strident arguments about Israel's indispensable power in case America should make a military entry in the Persian Gulf have tended to discredit the Jewish state on campuses and even in the liberal press where suspicion of Cold War rhetoric continues to run high. Rather, disingenuous Palestinian rhetoric about self-determination is increasingly capturing the high ground within America's progressive constituency, just when considerations of Israel's strategic worth—and Robert Tucker's revelations about its nuclear threat—have given many a pretext to become indifferent to Israel's danger.

Commentary's widely publicized turn against the "liberals" also has contributed to the political climate in which combinations of Jews and less well-educated people in the labor movement have themselves turned against liberal senators and politicians—against Church, Bayh, Mondale, and others—who have been leading Israel's fight in the Congress for a generation.

What has *Commentary* gained by this? The magazine will point with some pride to the appointments of Kirkpatrick and Gershman to the UN, and of Pipes to the Russian desk at the State Department. The former will no doubt use the forum also to rail against the PLO as Moynihan has done. But the choice for America's foreign-policy establishment, new and old, has never been between Israel and the PLO, which is why the Camp David accords were conceived. The

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choice, rather, continues to be between support for Israel and the immediate protection of American interests in the Gulf.

Granted, these options seemed to coincide between 1970 and 1973, after Israel won the War of Attrition on the Suez Canal and seemed the only invincible policeman at America's disposal: Israel, after all, helped save Hussein's regime in September 1970, and might have been enlisted to support the Saudis as well. But this strategic hiatus did not last. The choice between Israel and the more important Arab regimes became distinct again after the 1973 war when experts as different as Henry Kissinger and George Ball both could see what Sadat openly claimed, that Egypt and the Saudis are more important allies against Soviet expansion in the Gulf than Israel's phantoms. Those phantoms, after all, may be useful only in some all-out war that is likely to ruin the oil installations for which war would be waged.

Eliyahu Salpeter, a writer for the Israeli daily *Haaretz*, has remarked that most Israelis are smart enough to worry that the Saudi-connected Bechtel Corporation—the recent turf of Caspar Weinberger and George Schultz—Mobil Oil, and others are likely to have more clout in the Reagan administration than the brainy Mr. Gershman. Weinberger's recent noises about stationing American troops in Israel are nothing new and seem more a cover for arming Saudi F-15s with offensive potential than a statement of concern for Israeli lives.

This raises another important problem for Jews produced by *Commentary*'s contribution to wide-scale disillusionment with democratic humanism. Although the magazine will no doubt attack such fundamental Christian groups as the Moral Majority and NCPAC in the months ahead, *Commentary* cannot escape its complicity in the far-reaching cultural consequences the New Right has wrought. Just what kind of "spiritual values" did Kristol and Glazer expect from Americans made content by "tradition," but the one, explicitly, that denies God listens to the prayers of Jews? Were our own parents such idiots for promoting the urbane, communitarian values of the democratic left and resisting the amazing grace of market individualism?

A good number of American Jews, in fact, have been deeply demoralized by *Commentary*'s obscuring of the actual political traditions we've had in America since 1881. Our élan has not been in our "interests" but in our roots: the sweatshops, the unions, the *Forwards*, the New Deal, the antifascist leagues, the civil rights movement; and in figures as different as Emma Goldman, Abe Cahan, Aaron Copeland, and Justice Brandeis. Their ideals are not made and unmade by income brackets, but have been the stuff of our families' dinner conversations long before we could all speak English. Such ideals entail heroes, sensibilities, moral taste, the civil religion to which we try to make converts by insisting on a sense of history.

And how can *Commentary*'s regulars sensibly speak of the American Jews' traditions while no longer tolerating the writers whom the magazine once acknowledged to be the basic record of our experience? This is not a rhetorical question. *Commentary* has abandoned American Jewish writing to its ideologically primed book reviewers, and has virtually stopped publishing the fiction of our best American Jewish writers who, if Podhoretz's reformed views on Philip Roth are any indication, only serve to reinforce the conceits of the New Class. Ruth Wisse has argued that Arthur Miller, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, and the rest have generated merely a literature "about Jews," but not one issuing from "the civilization and religious structure of the Jews" like the work of the talented but permanently obscure Montreal Jewish poet A. M. Klein. To be a Jewish author one must hold that a "meaningful Jewishness—whether religious, Zionist, ethnic, or any other kind—exists or deserves to exist." This is, I suppose, how the "commandment of Auschwitz" works as literary criticism.

What can American Jews be about if our own public stories are counterfeit? Consider Cynthia Ozick's reaction to Harold Bloom's book on the Kabbalah, and compare it to Marc Galanter's poignant defense of Brother

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Daniel. Dismissing Bloom's claim to be confronting the God of the Fathers, Ozick writes: "The recovery of the Covenant can be attained only in the living out of the living Covenant; never among the shamanistic toys of literature." And Ozick's ungenerous sermon seems hardly unique since *Commentary* has gradually, but surely, reinstated Orthodox Judaism, really a manipulated version of it, lacking in authentic faith, as the only American Jewish practice to match Zionism in inspiring the cohesion necessary for Jews to make their fights. No more articles by anthropologists like Erich Isaac on dietary laws and circumcision. Instead, we see Robert Alter's attack on the "scientific" views of Jean Soler regarding "Kashrut," Ruth Wisse's defense of a male-only rabbinate, and Haim Maccoby's panegyrics to the Orthodox movement.

Alter and Wisse are brilliant polemicists and their pieces should certainly have been published. But can *Commentary* defend its disposition not to publish, except in the letters column, any dissenting voices especially on questions of Orthodoxy? Does it seriously expect American Jews to revive Halachic community, or that Halachic standards should entirely prevail? Have Podhoretz, Alter, and Wisse been exemplary purveyors of the living Covenant as against the "shamans of literature"? Ruth Wisse may be correct that much of American Jewish literature would seem remote to the ordinary Jews who populate the Yiddish stories she has masterfully retrieved. But then, Americans are now not ordinary Jews and might be appreciated for not having been ordinary hypocrites.

Yet *Commentary* has not even been right about the American Jewish interests for which we are supposed to brush aside American Jewish values. Whatever the experiences of their parents during the post-World War II boom, young American Jews have disproportionately benefited from government spending on welfare, science, and education, because they are disproprotionately the young professionals, educators, and administrators the magazine has sought to defend in opposing affirmative action programs. Most of us live in the big Northeastern cities whose decay can be reversed only by more federal spending on housing, mass transit, public works, pollution control, and so forth. But there is a corporate Jewish interest in social policy that is even more compelling. In an unpublished 1979 report for a major Jewish organization, Arthur Samuelson has noted that in the crucial fields of service (such as health, child care, aid to the elderly), Jewish philanthropic agencies—especially those expanded to serve non-Jews as well—were receiving 51 percent of their funds from government grants. That figure must be considerably higher today. As Samuelson observes, these agencies do more than help the indigent; they "provide the essential organizational and moral backbone" of the Jewish community itself, since fund-raising and committee work have become preeminent secular forms of Jewish identification.

Massive cuts to welfare programs, such as the ones now proposed by OMB Director David Stockman, will cause some of these agencies to collapse. Jewish educational institutions will fare no better: YIVO has been saved from bankruptcy for several years by the National Endowment for the Humanities, which seems very high on Stockman's hit-list. And how many American universities will agree to participate in the development of Jewish studies programs if further cuts reduce academic operating budgets? How many American Jewish bright but not brilliant students will be able to to go to good universities when tuition is almost $10,000 a year and loans for education are drying up? Does Glazer expect the "*Landsmanshaften*" to pick up this slack? Jewish philanthropic rates have in fact been falling as compared to the national average since peaking in the years after the 1967 War. And if American Jews were to revive their welfare institutions with a new flood of cash, would there be enough left to cope with Israel's problems?

Commentary's approving attitudes toward cuts in social spending are also helping to undermine Israel's related and crucial need for foreign aid. Government attempts to "get off the backs" of Americans may dump Israelis on their backsides. The Jewish state today

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gets three times as much aid directly from the American government as it gets from American Jews. But Stockman has also insisted that foreign aid programs be cut to prepare a balanced budget by 1983. He is not alone. A Yankelovich poll in 1978 ascertained that some 72 percent of all Americans concur with Stockman that aid should be cut. Can they be expected to bail out Israel when Cleveland is permitted to default on its bonds? Does this year's reprieve guarantee next year's aid and that of the year thereafter?

Toward the end of *Making It*, Podhoretz recalls his decision to replace Elliot Cohen as *Commentary*'s editor. He writes.

> Because Elliot Cohen had had something new to say, like it or not, *Commentary* had been charged with vitality for the first ten years which according to Edmund Wilson was the natural life span of a genuine editorial impulse; all *Commentary* had done since . . . was to insist over and over again, and in an endless variety of ways, on points which had already been made, which had already sunk in, which had no further juice in them. The moment had clearly come to say something new, and the possibility of saying it through a monthly magazine was almost certainly there.

There is, I dare say, sound advice in this. □

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